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# THE DAYS OF OLD AND THE YEARS THAT ARE PAST

BY

WALTER A. MONTGOMERY

SECOND LIEUTENANT, COMPANY F  
TWELFTH NORTH CAROLINA INFANTRY



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# THE DAYS OF OLD AND THE YEARS THAT ARE PAST

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WALTER A. MONTGOMERY

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TWELFTH NORTH CAROLINA INFANTRY





Walter Alexander Montgomery, the author of the manuscript from which these chapters are selected, was born in Warrenton, North Carolina, in 1845, entered the Confederate Army in May 1861, and saw active service from the Seven Days Battles around Richmond to the Surrender at Appomattox. He practised law from 1866 to 1917, with the exception of ten years' service as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. He died in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1921.



## CHAPTER I.

### The Slaves of My Childhood.

**A**NOTHER influence that made no small impression upon my thought and character was that of the individual slaves, men and women, in intimate association with whom my boyhood and youth were passed. They were of as distinctive differences as their white owners, developing marked talents and traits of character which affected all who knew them.

From my birth, my nurse was an "old mammy" by the name of Dorcas; and as my brother Robert was younger than myself by only fourteen months, the care of him fell to her also. My youngest brother, Alfred, was about eighteen months old when his mother died, and his nurse was a good looking mulatto woman, twenty years old, by the name of Lizzie. She was discharged from her position as nurse because on one occasion, being desirous of going to some social gathering and enraged because he would not go to sleep, she stuck a needle into the infant's hip. This was the only instance of cruelty to a charge on the part of a nurse of the old regime that I ever heard of.

Old "Aunt Dorcas" requires more than a passing notice. She was a pure blooded negress, of dark brown complexion, straight in her figure, and at least five feet ten inches tall. I remember her as being always neat in her dress, cheerful, quiet in her manner, and most affectionate, but stern in her management of my little brother and myself. One of the slaves brought to my father by his marriage, she was fond of my mother, and of course most affectionate to her orphaned children. She died about two years, or a little more, after the death of my mother. Her body was buried at "The Oaks", the home of my grandmother. The last rites were performed by my father, who read the Episcopal burial service over her body. I remember that it was the deepest grave I ever saw. It was measured and found to be more than six feet deep; and having been dug into red earth in a dry season, the pile of earth just around the grave was enormous in bulk.

In my eagerness to hear and to see all that was going on, I

crept close up to my father while he was reading the service, and as I was peeping over into the excavation, my foot caught on some loose earth and I tumbled in the grave on the planking over the coffin. I was at once extricated, but was terribly frightened. I was handed over to the custody of "Uncle" Phil, a brother of Mammy Dorcas, and taken, after the burial, back to my home under his especial care. The journey was only a mile to my home in town, but it seemed an interminable distance. I was riding in a vehicle with other colored members of the family, beside Uncle Phil, and, of course, listened intently and eagerly to their conversation. I have remembered with distinctness throughout the entire course of my life, that Uncle Phil said in a low voice to the one seated next to him, "That was a bad sign, and it's bad luck; and the rule is he will be the next one to go". The old man did not intend for me to hear it, but I did; and it put me in great terror.

Uncle Phil was one of three children, the third one being Uncle Kinchen. Both brothers were more than six feet tall, very dark brown, but not black; and all three were of the same character and characteristics. They were honest, truthful, industrious, and possessed of remarkable force of personal character. Their features, eyes, nose, mouth and chin, and heads were as well formed and as noticeable as those features in the face of any white person I ever saw. Uncle Phil managed everything at our home place in Warrenton, without instructions from his master, until he was seventy years old, when he was sent to one of my father's plantations to pass the remainder of his life without labor, and in comfort. My father never spoke a word to him in his life except in kindness, and always manifested his trust and his confidence in him.

I remember one incident which will show their relations. My father had bought from a drover a young gray horse apparently normal, but in reality without the least animal sagacity, and he could not be broken to harness. My father and Uncle Phil had tried on many occasions to make the animal docile and tractable, but after repeated failures they lost their patience one day, and Uncle Phil, stooping down, picked up a stick and struck, intending to hit him on the head, but missed

his aim and knocked an eye out. Even that did not irritate my father, and he merely said he did not blame Phil. My father often told me that the old man, in his retirement at the farm, manifested the most intense interest concerning my brother Robert and myself while we were in the Confederate service. He felt as near to us as if he were our own father. In his last illness, he was brought up to our home in Warrenton for treatment and attention. He died, in August, 1863, aged about 74, and his body was consigned to the earth by my father, as had been Mammy Dorcas's fifteen years before, and by her side. He had also, the year before, buried the body of "Uncle" Phil's wife, good old Aunt Effie.

Uncle Kinchen was even more remarkable than his brother, Phil. He was the head-man at "The Oaks"; and directed everything as to particulars, under the general superintendence of his master, my grandfather Cheek. An anecdote will illustrate the close tie between Kinchen and his master, and also the characteristics of my grandfather, his independence and his self-reliance. One day, in building a bridge across a stream on the plantation, a large timber slipped and broke Uncle Kinchen's leg. My grandfather instantly put a negro boy on a horse to go for the surgeon, and taking from his pocket a memorandum book wrote on one of the leaves, "Dr. Pope, come at once. My most trusted and valuable negro, Kinchen, has had his leg broken. Make haste, and come and help me set it."

At the death of my grandfather Cheek, in 1848, Kinchen took charge of "The Oaks" and the plantation, and managed slaves, cattle and the farming without restraint or limitation by my grandmother. His control and management lasted until the surrender of Lee's Army. The farm was managed with as much judgment as any other in Warren County. Large crops of tobacco, handled with care and sold to advantage, and some cotton, were made every year. Everything on the place was profusely provided for, and in addition corn, wheat and meat were sold every year. My grandmother's estate was considerably increased by the services and the judgment of that old negro. There was never known to be disorder on the premises, and depredations by the Cheek negroes on the property of adjoining

farms were never committed. The old man, after the war was over, went to a little home of his own, always kept up his friendship for the family and all its branches, and especially loved me and was proud of my success at the bar.

I remember that, one day, at my home, when he and I were talking about his former life at "The Oaks", he said, "Walt, but the best thing I ever done was managing the niggers. Thah never was a Cheek nigger in the Court House. Naw suh! Ther' never was a one of them thah for trial." I answered, "Uncle Kinchen, you have forgotten: I know that the Cheek negroes were good negroes, but I remember they had Bray up in the courts." The old man replied, "Oh, Walt, that was about nothin' but a 'oman. I was talkin' about stealin', or somethin' mean."

One peculiarity about Kinchen's intercourse with the white people was remarkable. In addressing the white men, even of his own age, however eminent, or responsible, if he knew them well, and they knew him, he very often called them by their Christian names; and they took no offense. The old man died in Warren County at his home in 1871 or '72, more than seventy-five years old.

Uncle Kinchen and Uncle Phil had a kinsman by the name of Guston, who also belonged to my father, and was as remarkable a man, as a slave, as either one of the two brothers I have described. My father put to the different "trades" several of his negroes. Adam and Jackson were taught carpentering, Henderson and Burgess blacksmithing, Glasgow the trade of rock mason; and Guston was set to house-painting. They were all sober, intelligent, polite, industrious and well-behaved. Guston was the best house-painter in that section of the country. At the close of the war, when he had just turned thirty years, he engaged in painting some warehouses along the Augusta Air Line Railroad, in Chatham County, about one hundred miles from Warrenton, his home.

Shortly after the surrender of Johnston's Army, a Northern soldier, whose former business had been house-painting, recognized Guston's capacity and qualification for his work, and induced him to go to St. Louis and settle there. Before he started for his new home, he wrote my father a letter which deserves

to be recorded. In that letter, the former slave recited the monetary value as a slave to which he had attained, and expressed his gratitude for having been placed in a situation in life wherein he could better his condition in his new life of freedom. He also wrote that he knew my father must be distressed over the loss of his slave property. He wrote him that he would take to the depot in Raleigh his chest of tools and equipment, and also those of Jackson and Adam, with directions for all three chests to be turned over to my father's order. They were of so much value that I, myself, came to Raleigh, received the tool-chests, and had them sent to Warrenton. Guston had a sister, Betsy, two years younger than himself, married and with three children, the family belonging to my father. For many years, until the death of his sister and the maturity of her children, Guston sent back to Betsy at Warrenton, punctually every month, never less than twenty-five dollars and oftener forty, for the support of the family. I knew that fact of my own knowledge.

Guston was a man of stocky build, low in stature, with rounded shoulders. His voice was soft and low, and he scarcely spoke unless he was spoken to. He appeared to be always thoughtful. I recall that he never laughed heartily, and his risibles were manifested in a half chuckle. Until he was put to the painter's trade, he lived at our home in town, and every Sunday I taught him "his lessons", reading, spelling, writing and plain arithmetic, along with Smith's English Grammar. His mind was not a bright one; but he was so diligent, so determined to learn, that he had acquired useful knowledge of the rudiments before he left the home-place to learn his trade. How deadly in earnest he was will be seen from the fact that I, his only teacher, was only eight years old when I began to teach him.

In concluding my remembrances of individual slaves, it is of intense interest to me to record that my father, though a kind-hearted man, and most sensitive to the sufferings of everyone, probably never had to occur to him in his life any doubts or questionings as to the ethical side of the institution of slavery. He accepted it as thoroughly as he did the system of government under which he was born. I never heard either him or Mr. William Eaton, my preceptor in the law, the former a thorough rep-



representative of the practical side of the ante-bellum system, the latter one of the completest representatives of the literary and contemplative side, both men of the highest nobility of character, express any apologetic sentiments touching the institution of slavery.

My father, it is also of interest to recall, had only a few times in my memory to have a slave punished. One instance was in the case of Adam. Adam was in every respect a marked contrast to Guston. He was over six feet in height, a pure African in his color, but not in feature, very intelligent and quick. He, as I see it now, bitterly resented his condition as a slave, and was known as "insolent and quarrelsome." The incident of his flogging is the only one I ever knew among my father's slaves. It was done by another slave, at the order of my father.

Strange to say, I was opposed to slavery from the time I was six years old, and everywhere openly avowed that sentiment; and I often told my father that if he left me any slaves in his will, I would free them. The negroes knew, of course, of my sentiments, and it was pathetic to hear each one say that he or she, at my father's death, would like to fall to my lot. I remember that, one day, while I was a boy, I was reading a treatise—I think by Dr. Whately—against the right of one man to own property in another. My father came in, and in answer to his question as to what I was reading, I told him; whereupon he said, "Ah, son, such books will ruin you, if you read them."



## CHAPTER II.

### **My Friends among the Negroes.**

I HAVE sketched the character and traits of individual slaves who exerted a marked influence upon the formative years of my infancy and boyhood. I wish now to write of others of the same race whom I knew intimately in a later period of my life.

One who played an important part in my life and history was Burgess, my friend and servant. If any of my descendants should read what I here write concerning my feelings toward Burgess, and my relations with him, it is doubtful whether they will understand the one, or appreciate the other. I shall only say here that, whatever speculation has been or may be indulged in in the future as to the relations that existed in the South between many masters and their slaves, and especially towards those of the immediate household, those relations as I saw them were affectionate, faithful, and sympathetic. Burgess came to my grandfather Montgomery through his marriage with my grandmother, Charlotte Jordan. When a youth he was badly injured in the hip, by the falling of a limb from a tree, and was made permanently lame in consequence of that accident. He was, from that time, taken into domestic service, and for the last two years of my grandfather's life, he was his constant attendant.

Burgess told me, after I was a man, an incident in my grandfather's life illustrative of the force of my father's character. He said that after my grandmother's death my grandfather took to strong drink, and would frequently go to Henderson, the nearby town, and drink to excess; that upon my father's finding out that condition of things, he made a special visit to my grandfather for the purpose of having a conversation with him on the subject of his habits; and that before the visit was over, my grandfather had consented to forego his visits to Henderson, and to confine his use of ardent spirits to his own home. A lot of liquors to my grandfather's taste were ordered by my father, and Burgess was instructed to see that the supply did not give out, and that my grandfather was to have it for his free use. Burgess told me that he carried out his instructions, and that his master kept his word. Though my father never mentioned the

matter to me in his life, I know that Burgess told the truth, for he was a thoroughly truthful and honest man.

At the time of the division of my grandfather's estate, Burgess came to my father, and was afterward engaged in light service until emancipation. He and I were friends from the time he came to live with us; and when I went into the army, my father virtually gave him to me, and he was with me throughout the war until the end of hostilities, except for a few days in the trenches at Petersburg. When I found that the command to which I belonged was going to occupy that position in March, 1865, I sent him home.

Lame as he was, he accompanied me through the summer campaigns. He would sometimes excite the sympathy of some one of the teamsters and thus secure a ride, but in the main he marched with the troops. He went with the army to Gettysburg and back. In winter quarters he was useful as cook and servant, and his good sense and good manners enabled him to become a successful "forager". He would go out into the country around the camp, and make such representations and pleas with mistresses and cooks as would result in his bringing to camp fowls, eggs, flour, applebutter, honey, etc.

I sent him home in December 1862, while I was in camp near Fredericksburg, to get and bring back a box of something "good to eat", not forgetting some liquid goods to make cheer for the coming Christmas Season. The sequel brought him mortification and me disappointment. The box of eatables was prepared at home, and Burgess started with it for the army. Under my instructions he had taken along with him from camp a "Yankee knapsack", that is, one with two compartments (the Confederate having only one), for the purpose of bringing back the apple brandy, the only kind of liquor then in common use. He had been told, when he left camp, to put several bottles of the brandy in the lower compartment of the knapsack, to cover and protect them with his clothes, and to put one bottle on the top compartment, open to observation, so that when his baggage should be searched by the Provost Guard when he arrived at Guinea Station, where he was to leave the cars for the camp, the guard, upon finding the exposed bottle of liquor, would conclude that that was the whole cargo, and discontinue the search.

Upon arriving at Guinea, it was too late for Burgess to procure transportation for the box to the camp and he placed it in a shed near the depot, and lay down by it to sleep. He never drank to excess, but unfortunately for him, he took enough of the bottle of brandy to make him sleep soundly, and while he was in that condition, some of the guard, taking in the whole of the situation, stole the box of provisions, and divided the contents amongst themselves. The ruse as to the safe keeping and delivery of the brandy was successful, and he brought that, except the bottle in the top compartment, which the guard confiscated, safely into camp. I sent him back home the next day for another box of provisions. It was a melancholy journey for Burgess, for while he did not expect corporal punishment from my father, he knew he would get a severe reprimand. Within a few days he was back in camp with the second box.

Burgess' account of the second trip was most amusing. He told me he was both ashamed and afraid to meet my father and inform him of what had happened; that, on arriving at Warrenton, he went first to the home to acquaint "Miss Sarah" (my step-mother), with his misfortune, in the hope of enlisting her sympathy; that he received no encouragement from his Miss Sarah, she only telling him that his master would "blow him up". He said that he went slowly, and reluctantly down to the store (my father's place of business), and found him busy over the books in the counting room; and that after standing there some minutes very much embarrassed, being afraid to make his presence known, my father suddenly turned and saw him, and exclaimed "Hayeigh-o (his great salutation), Burgess, has anything happened to Walter? Is he sick, or has he been killed or wounded? What is the matter?" He further told me that my father was so relieved and rejoiced to learn that I was well, and that no harm had come to me, that he didn't "even get mad", and only said, "How did it all happen?" That he then gave him the particulars, truthfully, winding up by saying "But, Master, I done the very best I could." Whereupon, my father exclaimed, "You scoundrel you, what worse could you have done? You got drunk, and lost everything you had, except a little brandy."

I have seen Burgess hundreds of times, on the march, and in camp, before eating the slender rations of army life, take off his

hat and seat himself, and, after a moment's seeming abstraction, proceed as if he were eating a full meal. The hat was never restored to his head until the meal was over.

A further incident will confirm all I have written. At Gettysburg he was near enough to the battlefield of the first day to learn what was going on there. He knew that I was engaged in the conflict, and his anxiety for my safety, and his fears as well, determined him that night to learn of my fate. He went, in the darkness, to where he was told Rodes' Division was in bivouac, after the day's battle was over, and went up and down the lines, inquiring of every brigade and regiment for the 12th North Carolina, to which I belonged. He was told when he reached that regiment that I had been slightly wounded, and would be found at the field hospital on Forney's Farm. He found me.

His description of his journey in his search for me showed how intense was the interest and love he felt in and for me, and also, his physical and moral courage. He said he followed the trail of the ambulances, returning from the field to the rear on their way with the wounded to the field hospitals; and that sometimes he almost abandoned the idea of going any further because of the cries of the wounded in the ambulances as they jolted along the rough roads, and the number of dead and wounded lying in the fields, the latter hailing every passer-by with piteous cries for water and help, and blood everywhere and on everything—all so appalling and terrifying.

His lameness, his politeness, his genteel appearance, caused him to be known to many outside of the regiment, and he met with many favors, especially on the march.

With the story of Burgess' devotion is closely associated in my memory the moving loyalty of another slave. Similar incidents, of course, happened in all the Southern armies; but of this particular one I was an eye-witness. The body of Colonel Isaac Avery of the North Carolina Infantry, who was killed at Gettysburg on the late afternoon of July 2, 1863, in the attack on East Cemetery Hill, had been placed in a rude box by the dead hero's old negro body servant, and was being carried along with the retreating Confederate Army. One afternoon, not far from Hagerstown, because of the increasing offensiveness of the body, the old negro was assailed and ordered to drive it off the high-

way and abandon or bury it. He was cursed and beaten with pieces of fence rail by some of the troops; but he remained faithful to his trust. With several other North Carolina soldiers, I came to the old negro's rescue, and enabled him to carry his charge to a place of safety. The body eventually reached Colonel Avery's home in Morganton, North Carolina, and was buried there.

When I returned to Warrenton from Appomattox, I found Burgess, who had been sent home from Petersburg a few weeks before, ready to receive me with open arms. From that day, he renewed his services and his kindnesses to me. He secured employment during the day hours at remunerative wages, as a "striker" in a blacksmith's shop, and for some time waited on me in the morning, and at night, in my bedroom. One day shortly after my return from the army, at his dinner hour, he called at my room for some purpose, and found me engaged in conversation with a cousin, concerning a pair of high-legged boots, of good quality, which I had been wearing. Burgess listened intently, and saw that at the close of the talk, my cousin carried the boots away. The next morning, when I awoke, and was getting out of bed, I noticed a pair of boots, new, and a pair of socks, beside the bed. Burgess, out of his earnings, had bought the articles, and had placed them where I found them.

The history of the boots mentioned above is interesting. On the retreat of the army from Gettysburg, at Monterey Gap, on the night of July 4th, the Union cavalry broke into our line of march, burnt a number of wagons, and stampeded a herd of neat cattle. A detachment from our brigade came up on the scene, killed or dispersed the cavalry, and restored order. The next morning we found, lying just behind the toll-gate house on that spot, a Federal junior officer of cavalry, who had been killed the night before. From the front seat of an ambulance, which I had been occupying on account of my wound, I saw my cousin, William R. Cheek, engaged in trying to remove the boots from the dead soldier's feet, but without success. I went to him, and with my aid he succeeded in getting the boots off. He tried to put them on, but they were too small, and I bought them on the spot for two hundred and fifty dollars, Confederate money, and sent them home, later on, as I could not wear them in the infantry service.



I had been using them occasionally after my return from the surrender. My cousin's conversation which Burgess heard was concerning the purchase price for the boots. I could not pay their value in gold, or in U. S. currency, and surrendered them to him in satisfaction of the debt.

There were two other persons, Hans Nunnery and Amos Williams, of Warrenton, classed with the negro population, who represented a type of our civilization at that time. With both, in my early manhood, I had considerable association. They were slaves, bright mulattoes, both village barbers, and, as a matter of course, both Democrats. The barber shops of that day were the general gathering places of those young men and boys who were without steady employment, where, in the intervals between waiting on customers, the barber joined the crowd in singing glee-songs, dancing and drinking. Both Hans and Amos drank freely, and at all hours. Hans was always cheerful and good-natured and obliging.

Hans was a very large man, six feet two or three inches tall, and corpulent. He was a good trencherman, and kept his table well provided with the good things of life. He resembled Henry Ward Beecher, very strikingly. His upper face, head and hair, also, bore a marked likeness to those of Dumas, the novelist, who, it will be recalled, was second from a negro ancestress. There was not a more intelligent man in the town than Hans. Of course, he was illiterate. Everybody had an affection for him, everybody knew him to be perfectly honest. He was as generous as a prince, and stood ready at all hours, night and day, to do a service for anybody who might call upon him.

For months after the war, the town was garrisoned by a Federal cavalry company, and Hans' barber shop was always filled with military customers, who had plenty of greenbacks. Hans charged full professional prices for his services, and freely shared the proceeds with the Confederate young men, who were generally without money. He regarded the "Yankee" soldier from the same point of view as did his Confederate friends, so intimate were his relations with the white people among whom he was reared. The physical hardships of slavery had never touched Hans. His owner, from strong ties, was very kind to him, and

he was always his own man except in name. Before the war he had been the most experienced and valuable worker in a harness and saddle factory.

Hans' only cross in life was the watchful eye kept on him by his faithful wife Retha, who often interfered with his midnight revels and carried him home "all seas over".

Hans was subjected to an indignity and cruelty during the war that would have been resented in a tangible manner if any of his friends in the army had been at home. There was quite a resentment among the town people, but so powerful was the influence of slavery over the conduct of the Southern people that under scarcely any circumstances would the mistreatment of slaves by whites be publicly condemned or punished. It required an unusual case of violence or cruelty to arouse a Southern community to action or to bring to bear the arm of the law to punish those who inflicted injury upon a slave. Hans was returning home one night after nine o'clock when he was taken by a patrol squad of whites, and, because he had technically violated an ordinance of the town requiring all slaves to be at their own homes before the curfew hour, he was stripped on the streets and whipped with a rawhide. The men engaged in that wanton cruelty were never forgotten by the substantial people of the town, but they were never punished in any way for the outrage.

John Harris and Bacchus Plummer, two intimate friends with similar tastes and habits, resembled Hans in some particulars. They, too, had been slaves. John was a light, good-looking mulatto, six feet tall, with negro hair but long and wavy, and mustache and chin whiskers of stylish cut. Bacchus was a plain negro, without any distinguishing features, but he was quite intelligent. He built my house (a large and roomy one) in Warrenton merely from the rough plans and specifications I was able to give him. They both drank too freely for their good. They had many of the qualities of the sportsman, and were good shots on the wing. They were both married men with families. Bacchus was a carpenter, and John the most accomplished house servant I ever saw. He belonged to my father all his life until emancipation. He is now living in Warrenton, and has not outgrown his affection for me. I see him occasionally, and hear

from him often. Each bird season he sends me partridges which he still is able to shoot on the wing, though he is quite seventy years old. Bacchus has been dead these many years.

Until I left Warrenton for Raleigh to live, John would frequently call to see me on Sundays, have dinner after the family had dined, and later on in the afternoon would frequently walk with me in the fields and woods. On one of our walks I said, "John, I hear that Bacchus has made a profession of religion, and has joined the church. Is what I hear true?" "Oh, yes, Marse Walter, he surely has." "John, is it a genuine conversion? Has he changed his life and habits?" "Yes, Sir, he goes to church every Sunday, sits up high with his wife, and goes to prayer meeting every Thursday night." I said, "John, you are dodging my question; you know what I'm after. Does Bacchus drink as much whiskey as he formerly did?" John stopped, looking sad as if he were fighting a battle between the truth and his friendship for Bacchus, and, after a moment replied, "Marse Walter, I am bound to say, I think he do, but he carry it better than he used to."



## CHAPTER III.

### **Enlistment in the Confederate Army.**

#### **Duel between the Merrimac (Virginia) and the Monitor.**

**I**N May, 1861, I entered the Confederate Army, Co. E, First North Carolina Cavalry (Ninth North Carolina State Troops), Colonel (later General) Robert Ransom commanding. The regiment was formed from various sections of the State, and went into camp of instruction in Warren County, at Camp Beauregard. There all the ten companies assembled, horses were furnished, and the equipment completed; and until September, when the regiment left for Virginia, the troopers were drilled and trained to a high degree of efficiency. Although their services were urgently needed in Virginia, Ransom refused to move his men until they showed the effects of discipline and training. From the first day of their service in Virginia until the close of the war, the First N. C. Cavalry was regarded as the best cavalry regiment in the Confederate service. It, also, had that reputation among the Union cavalry. I have read numerous encomiums of their bravery and skill from opposing Union soldiers.

But my career as a cavalryman was to be cut short. Colonel Ransom, because of his friendship with my father, had induced him to consent to my entering the service as bugler of the cavalry regiment he was then organizing. I was to be at headquarters and under the eye of the Colonel. I was scarcely of a hundred pounds weight, of delicate frame, and only sixteen years and three months old. I was furnished with a beautiful bay horse, a handsome uniform and a silver bugle. I practised assiduously on that instrument, and in a few days was able to make intelligible calls for drill, until the middle of August, when Dr. Charles O'Hagan, assistant surgeon of the regiment, made a physical examination of the men. When he reached me, without examination, he laughed and said, "Why, Colonel Ransom, this lad cannot make a soldier. He is too small, and he's too delicate as well. He apparently has no strength." Upon my vigorously protesting, and upon Colonel Ransom's interference in my behalf, Dr. O'Hagan, a very impetuous and domineering man,

became somewhat vexed, and said to Colonel Ransom that the examination of the men in his regiment was the surgeon's business and not to be interfered with by even the colonel of the regiment. He pushed up my shirt sleeve, and asked Colonel Ransom to look at my arm. It was small, flabby, and covered with long silken hair, the flesh being snow-white. The doctor then remarked that the boy had signs of lung trouble, and he would bet that if he would be honest in answering questions, he would admit that he had been troubled with headache, indigestion, and frequent bleeding at the nose. He absolutely rejected me. I should have cried if I had not been so angry. It almost broke my heart to give up the bay horse; we had become so mutually attached.

That incident occurred between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. Within ten minutes afterwards, I was on my way to Warrenton, my home, five miles off, and within a week was in Norfolk, Virginia, enrolled as a private in Company A, 12th N. C. (Infantry) Regiment, then in "Camp Carolina", at Ward's Farm on Tanner's Creek, on the edge of Norfolk. A day or two after I left Camp Beauregard, the middle finger of my left hand was broken by the falling of a very heavy window; but notwithstanding the broken finger and the heat of the season, the plain camp rations and excessive drilling, I improved in strength and general health.

Our service at Norfolk was that of holiday soldiers. We visited the city whenever we wished, were in almost daily communication with our homes, and had frequent visits from our friends and members of our families. We formed friendships and social relations with the people of the city, and kept our trunks filled with citizens' wearing apparel, including dress-suits and thin long-legged boots, then the fashionable footwear.

Although it has been nearly sixty years ago, March 8th, 1862, I recall distinctly the scene of the naval engagement in Hampton Roads between the Virginia, better known as the Merrimac, the Confederate ironclad, and her sister ships of war and the United States battleships, the Cumberland, the Congress, and the Minnesota; and also the duel on the next day between the Merrimac and the Monitor. For months the conversion of the Merrimac (burnt to her copper-line upon the evacuation of Norfolk by the Federals in 1861) into an ironclad had been going on at

the Gosport navy yard, near Norfolk, and the Confederate soldiers from the camps and the defenses around that city had enjoyed the privilege of visiting the scene of the work. In fact the authorities seemed to encourage such visits. I often was admitted as a soldier-visitor and went through the ship in all of its stages of construction. The progress in building, though rapid considering all the circumstances, seemed to be slow in the judgment of the inexperienced, and its completion was awaited with impatience.

When it became generally known that the renovated vessel was ready for service, great was the rejoicing and greater still was the expectation of her future career. Amazement and vexation on the part of the public ensued when the report, in which the newspapers participated, was spread that the ship had been finished and tested, and that she was a complete failure. That announcement was intended to deceive the enemy at Fort Monroe, who received regularly the Norfolk papers. Within three days the Merrimac, in good shape, steamed down Elizabeth River on her way to Hampton Roads manned by a gallant crew and an able commander, all hopeful of the destruction of the enemy's shipping and battleships in the Roads at the very least. The expectations of the soldiers and the citizens were for much larger results. They predicted the silencing of the guns at Fort Monroe and the passage of the ship into open water. Then the cities on the seaboard would be open to attack and all battleships who offered to stand would be destroyed.

As the Merrimac left Norfolk almost the whole city, men, women and children followed her to get a view of the expected battle. Every steamboat, sailboat, skiff, anything that would float, was crowded with human masses on their way to Craney Island. Other hundreds went by land to various observation points. To witness the engagement, safely, the Confederate troops in the vicinity of Sewell's Point were brought to a point near the beach at that place and just to the southward. They were only partially screened from enemy observation by a growth of large pine and small scrub. We had a full view of the whole surrounding land and water.

The Confederate fleet as it left its moorings near the Navy Yard was composed of the Merrimac and the Beaufort and the

Raleigh, two small wooden crafts each carrying one or two small guns. The Merrimac was ill-shaped and ugly in appearance and, as I remember, seemed to be unpainted, or if so, of about a dun color. She was slow of speed and as she passed us nothing could be seen but the shield or house, the flags and some of the crew on the top of the roof. The spectacle was not outwardly imposing; but full appreciation on the part of the spectators of the valor of the men engaged in the hazardous expedition was evidenced by their cheers and words and gestures; and that feeling reached a flame of patriotic and martial enthusiasm in the breasts of the Confederate soldiers who looked on. Very many feared, however, that even if the Merrimac should be able, by ramming, to sink an enemy vessel, she would herself be carried down as an "iron-plated coffin" with her victims.

We, from the shore, eagerly watched the good ship as she reached the mouth of the Elizabeth to see whether she would steer down the Roads and attack Fort Monroe and the ships there, or turn up to Newport News and close with the two blockaders, the Cumberland and the Congress, at anchor there. When the Roads were reached she headed at once for the two enemy ships named. The Confederates were not expected. The washed clothes of the crew were hanging out, plainly seen from our position on the shore; and no preparations for defense were made until the Confederate ships were well on their way from where they entered the Roads.

At two p. m. the Beaufort fired the first gun at the Congress. The Merrimac after firing upon the Congress and receiving her fire passed that ship and made for the Cumberland lying broadside across the channel. In a few moments she was rammed by the Merrimac and sank speedily. In the meantime the smoke from the guns of the shore batteries at Newport News and from those of the ships shrouded the waters in darkness, but at intervals we could see the volleys from the Cumberland while she was fast going down, bow foremost. Some of the men were taking to small boats and others jumping into the water from the fast submerging deck. The Merrimac then turned and made for the Congress.

About this time the James River squadron, the Patrick Henry and the Jefferson, better known as the Jamestown, side-wheel

steamers plying before the war between Richmond and New York, unarmored and mounting only a few small guns, was seen passing the batteries at Newport News. They soon joined in the attack upon the Congress and the Minnesota, a large steam frigate (double decker) mounting more than forty guns, 9 inch and 11 inch Dahlgrens, and just arrived from Old Point. That ship, though she ran aground early in the action, beat off her assailants, the attack ceasing before dark. I could see plainly that she was leaning considerably on one side. The next morning numerous small crafts were moving around her either to pull her off, or to repair the damage of the evening before. After the battle had closed and the Confederate fleet anchored off Sewell's Point for the night, I could see the Congress distinctly. She was on fire and the occasionally dense volumes of smoke and the bright light from the burning cordage, sails and other inflammable material gave to the scene a most spectacular appearance. The climax arrived about midnight when the fire reached the large magazine, causing an explosion which literally blew the ship to pieces. The burning wreckage and the blazing timbers in fantastic shapes and scattered in all directions, the reflection upon the sky and the water, and the deafening noise of the explosion produced an effect upon the mind which cannot be described in words. The silence and the darkness which followed were equally impressive.

Until the explosion, my comrades and I had spent the night in eager anticipation of further developments, though without definite ideas of what might occur, in the meantime regaling ourselves with roasted oysters procured, in quantities, from a nearby oyster-catch station. We were not entirely satisfied with the day's work, though we could not say as much. We all thought that the Minnesota should have been destroyed.

The next morning at about 8 o'clock the Merrimac and the Patrick Henry left their anchorage near Sewell's Point for the scene of the battle of the evening before. They found the Monitor standing by the Minnesota, still aground. She opened the battle by firing on the Merrimac when they appeared to us on the shore as being right upon each other. They were a third of a mile apart, though. The two wooden ships took no part in the engagement, though the Merrimac several times drew off from the Monitor



and opened her guns upon the Minnesota which fired back in return. We could see that the main purpose of the Merrimac was to ram her antagonist. They were often a few yards apart. The only maneuvering of the Monitor was in eluding the thrusts of the Merrimac or running out into shallow water and firing from such positions. No other movements on her part were necessary for she could stand still and use her revolving turret. The movements of the big ship were very slow because of her great length, her heavy draft and a comparatively narrow channel. After a hide-and-seek game, as it were, for three hours, the Monitor retired to shallow water, where the Merrimac could not follow her and her guns could not reach. The Merrimac then returned to Norfolk. Neither vessel suffered any material damage.

After the Merrimac went into dock for repairs at the navy yard, I, with several comrades, went aboard and looked particularly to see what damage had been done to her in the battle. We found that the sides had not been pierced in a single instance, although in numerous places the impact of the enemy's shot or shell had driven in the iron plates and to some extent crushed the wooden supports.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Army Experiences.

NORFOLK was evacuated during the first week in May, 1862, and so sudden was our departure that considerable quantities of army supplies, the heavy ordnance of the many forts near the city, the valuable machinery at the Gosport Navy Yard and other valuable war material, were destroyed or left behind; and the private soldiers lost all their personal belongings. We went to Richmond from Norfolk, and from there were ordered to the Valley of Virginia to reënforce Jackson in his campaign against Milroy; but on reaching Gordonsville, by rail, we learned of Jackson's success at McDowell, and retraced our movement to Hanover Court House.

At that time I had no definite idea of what war really meant. Being of a mercurial and sanguine temperament, I partook of the then prevalent Southern sentiment, and was anxious to engage in a battle. The occasion was at hand—the battle of Hanover Court House, May 27, 1862—and my experience was most depressing. Our regiment, with one from Georgia and the five constituting Branch's North Carolina brigade, was beaten in the engagement and driven in great confusion, partly in the night, to Ashland. We had been hurried into the action without the least knowledge of the strength of the enemy, or of the direction from which he came. His numbers turned out to be greatly superior to ours, and were mainly United States Regulars, Morell's division. From Ashland we were marched to Richmond, and with three other North Carolina regiments, the 5th, 20th and 23rd, were formed into Garland's brigade.

The brigade had no serious part in the battle of Seven Pines, but commenced real service in the Seven Days Battles around Richmond. From that time to the 9th of April, at Appomattox, the 12th North Carolina Regiment took part in all the principal battles in which the Army of Northern Virginia was engaged. I was in the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Brandy Station, the Wilderness, Spottsylvania Court House, Winchester (1864), Belle Grove, Mine Run, Hatcher's Run, Fort Stedman (Hare's Hill), the last day's battle in the

trenches at Petersburg, Sailor's Creek and Appomattox, and was slightly wounded at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.

I have often been asked by many different types of people how a soldier feels in actual battle, and I believe it is a subject of much interest to all men. It is most difficult for a man who has been a soldier to describe accurately his feelings in battle. The supreme trial upon the physical courage is in the moments leading up to the actual fighting. The preparations, such as the locating of the field batteries of artillery, the arrangements for field hospitals, the placing of the ambulances in suitable positions, the organization of the litter bearers, the movements of the surgeons, the excited hurrying to and fro of couriers, the appearance on the scene of general officers, grave and silent on their mounts—all awaken intensest interest and produce the highest nervous anxiety. The invariable result upon the troops is a muscular tension, which produces great nervousness and energy of bodily action, especially of the urinary functions.

If the average soldier's feeling on entering battle may be said to be one of fear or of terror, it passes off with the firing of the first round, if the fighting be continuous. After that, excitement, passion, energy, the desire for victory, take the place of fear, and dangerous wounds are often received without the knowledge of the victim. I recollect that, at Gettysburg, Sergeant White, of my company, while in the act of firing his rifle, was struck on the knuckle by an enemy bullet, and turning to me as he flinched his hand, said "That fellow stung me pretty sharp". He became very pale and began to sink upon the ground as I caught him. The bullet had passed entirely through his body—his right lung. He was among our wounded and captured by the enemy; but recovered, returned from prison, married and reared a family.

If the wounds are of such a character as to require the aid of litter bearers and the service of the ambulances, the scenes at the field hospital are intensely depressing. The bloody blankets, the sight of amputated limbs thrown in heaps, the unconscious cries and shrieks of the chloroformed soldiers undergoing amputation of limbs or the probing of wounds for bullets, all tax to the utmost the strongest resolution.

Furthermore, the physical condition of the soldier at the time of battle is highly expressive, or rather indicative, of the spirit



in which he enters the scene. If he is strong in health, and his mental condition normal, the dread of consequences, while ever present and appreciated, is borne with comparative equanimity. If he is sick, or low-spirited, the terrors of the battle are magnified. The effect of battle upon different temperaments develops a variety of instincts and tastes. As for me, I could barely taste food during the days and nights of battle; but I could drink water at shortest intervals. I have frequently observed other men voraciously eating their rations during lulls in the battle without seeming to want water. Some who, in the quiet of the camp, were reserved and orderly, would manifest great excitement and swear like troopers; while others who were braggarts and profane would before battle become silent and fall to reading their Bibles.

One of the latter class, at the battle of Fredericksburg, just before the line was ordered forward, while under shell and picket fire, seeing one of his company reading his New Testament, as was his custom each day, asked for the loan of the book, and, of course, was accommodated. Seating himself behind a large oak, he commenced to read, when I said: "Hello! How has all this come about? You are almost just up from the card table, drinking and swearing, and now suddenly turned saint. It is a sort of death-bed repentance. You can't deceive anybody but yourself. Give the man his Bible, and take up your gun! The God of Battles calls you now!" He never forgave me, and though we lived for thirty years, and more, in the same town, he always—and naturally—disliked me.

I was more appalled at the battle of Spottsylvania, at the Horse Shoe Salient, on the 12th of May, 1864, than in any other battle in which I ever participated. We had been through a long march of sixty miles, from Taylorsville, where the brigade had been guarding a bridge over the North Anna River. Rejoining the Army of Northern Virginia, just in time for the battle of the 6th of May in The Wilderness, we marched thence over and through the battle fields down to Spottsylvania, engaging in a skirmish on the 9th, and the battle of the 10th. At daybreak on the morning of the 12th, from our position in reserve, we were ordered to march just in rear of the line of battle to the Salient where Hancock had broken the Confederate line, captured most

of Edward Johnson's Division, and was moving, unopposed, southward. We met the enemy almost face to face; and there occurred the bloodiest battle of the war. The darkness, the suddenness of the Federal onslaught, the complete breakup of our lines, the dreadful roar of artillery, the rattle of small arms, and the fierce shouts of the victorious Federals, quite unnerved me. But after we got a standing, and renewed the battle with reënforcements, my equilibrium was restored.

When I hear so frequently of the marvellous exploits and experiences of the old Confederates, nearly every one having some tale to tell of which he is the hero, I hardly dare narrate an incident which I witnessed at Spottsylvania; but I will venture it. Near the McCool house, at the base of the Horse Shoe Salient, the first line of Confederate troops was driven from the field in confusion. General Ewell, who was on the spot, personally engaged in trying to rally the men, lost his head, and with loud curses was using his sword on the backs of some of the flying soldiers. Just then General Lee rode up, and said: "General Ewell, you must restrain yourself; how can you expect to control these men when you have lost control of yourself? If you cannot repress your excitement, you had better retire." Then General Lee, in the quietest manner, moved among the men, and through their officers reformed the broken ranks.

One other incident of my army life, when I heard General Jackson's voice for the first and last time, will constitute my whole experience directly connected with those two great officers. When the battle of Chancellorsville was about to open, my regiment was in position near Hamilton's Crossing, watching Franklin's U. S. Corps cross the Rappahannock River, a little below Fredericksburg, a feint preparatory to Hooker's movement higher up the river.

General Jackson, with his staff, rode up to our command, and asked the officer commanding for an officer and forty or fifty men for particular service near the Cedar Road. Sharpshooters of the brigade, under Lieutenant Moseley of my company, were assembled, and General Jackson told Moseley, in a few words, what he wanted done and where he wanted him to go. Moseley spoke up, when Gen. Jackson seemed to intend to go with the party himself, saying, "General, you need not go; I know what

you want, I will do it. I have been picketing in that section and know almost every rock and rail on the Cedar Road." The General replied, "Lieutenant, come go with me: when I post you, then I'll know you are there." Moseley told me afterwards the incident not only gave him a good lesson, but showed him the keynote of Jackson's military success, personal supervision over important tactical movements.

Two other happenings connected with the battle of Chancellorsville came under my immediate observation, both extremely pathetic—one entirely so and entirely ennobling, and the other pathetic and yet with a touch of brutality.

Late one Sunday afternoon, a few days before the battle of Chancellorsville, and while we were in quarters at Grace Church, my friend and comrade in the same company, Lieut. William E. Johnston, called at my tent and related to Sergeant-Major Cook, Sergeant Pitcher and myself, the particulars of a dream or "vision", as he called it, from which he had just awakened and which was greatly disturbing his peace of mind. He said he saw himself receive a mortal wound in the head in a battle shortly to be fought. From that moment until Chancellorsville he ate little, was silent and depressed instead of being his usual jovial and hopeful self, and labored under the full impression that he would be killed in the next battle. He lost flesh and strength.

When the Confederate battle line was formed, Cook and myself, noticing the terrible mental strain under which Johnston was suffering because of his dreadful foreboding, urged him not to enter the battle. We assured him that the superior officers, knowing his splendid record as a soldier, would approve such an action when acquainted with the facts. He refused, saying that he would rather die than take such a course.

At the first volley from the enemy he received a bullet wound in the head which caused a copious hemorrhage. The bullet struck him just in the band of the low felt hat he was wearing and seemed to pass out almost on a plane with its entrance as evidenced by the hole in the back of the hat crown. He spoke to Sergeant-Major Cook and myself, calling our attention to his dream. (In a few moments the Sergeant-Major, himself, received a wound from which he died.) The surgeons concluded

that the bullet which struck Johnston had glanced and plowed its way over the skull and underneath the scalp, and that he would recover. After his wound was dressed he did not lie down except as usual.

He was sent, in two or three days, to a Richmond Hospital, with other wounded men. He had no appetite and lost flesh daily, insisting all the time that the ball had not passed out, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary. I also had been wounded, slightly, and was sent to a hospital for the wounded (Dr. Manson's) near the East end of Main Street; and Lieutenant Johnston twice walked across the street from his quarters to see me. He ate with relish some salt grated beef which my father had brought to me from home. Two days after his last visit, the hospital steward told me that a trepanning operation had been performed and that Johnston had died under it. The bullet had been split, one part passing out and the other found resting on the dura mater and causing inflammation. His forebodings had been true.

The other occurrence referred to happened as follows: As Rodes' Division was marching, silently by order, down the Orange Turnpike, in the rear of Howard's Federal Corps, to a nearby position where they were to form their battle line, General Jackson rode amongst the troops to encourage them by his presence. They knew the danger to which they were exposed and were anxious as to their handling as well as to the outcome of the battle. Cheered by the General's presence, a member of the 12th North Carolina Regiment, from Halifax County, and a former participant in many cockfights, yelled out, "Hurrah, boys! Here is old Jack! By G-d, he will heel us right!" As every sportsman of those days knew, the "gaffer", or "heeler" in cockfighting, played the most important rôle. The gamest and strongest cock, poorly heeled, had little chance against an inferior chicken well gaffed, and often killed himself with his own weapon.

The preëminent part played by trench warfare during the World War has brought forcibly to my remembrance the details of that kind of fighting as I participated in it around Petersburg from the late summer of 1864 on to Sunday, April 2, 1865, when Lee's lines were pierced. Such trench warfare, as

I knew it, differed so materially from that of which the public prints have recently been full, and to the Confederate soldier it was attended with so much hardship, and was so different from active service in the open field, that a few lines concerning the same may be appropriate.

The intrenchments immediately around the city consisted of redoubts or redans (small roughly constructed forts) connected by parapet lines for the infantry. The works were generally eight or ten feet high from the ground and as many wide, and were made of excavated earth supported and reinforced by timber. Traverses, probably twenty feet long, were added at proper distances at bends in the lines for protection against the enemy's crossfire. At important salients and very exposed redans there was overhead protection of stout timber, but none along the parapets. The approaches were obstructed by ditches, entanglements of various kinds—sometimes of wire-abatis and sharpened stakes with the butt ends sunk in the ground. The videttes or pickets occupied pits in the earth, protected from the front by the earth from the holes, and the pickets were relieved during the hours of night.

When the parapets were very near those of the enemy—as those opposite Fort Stedman—say two hundred yards—the watchman in the parapets was protected by triangles of twelve inch lumber with opening of four or five inches at the apices turned toward the enemy and broad enough at the bases to receive the head of the watchman. The contrivance was of course fastened securely to the top of the breastwork. The entrenchments were approached from the rear by zigzag ditches without cover—dry canals—as deep as a man's shoulder. The infantry's protection from cold and rain or snow consisted of low "dog-tents", over holes in the ground, and rubber cloths around them as they sat or leaned against the breastworks.

Rations, bread of corn meal, or flour made up with water and soda only and a third of a pound of "hog meat" daily to the man were brought from the rear where the "cooking" was done. Many of the men preferred their meat raw to save the waste of cooking. They cut it with their knives and ate it as they would cheese. There were as a rule no bathing facilities. I did not see an ounce of soap "issued by the commissary" the last year



of the War; and fortunate were those soldiers who could get it from the sutlers at even exorbitant prices.

The only sanitary arrangements were ditches two feet deep and two feet wide, sometimes sprinkled with lime and sand. They were ten or twelve feet in the rear of the breastworks and entirely exposed, and not infrequently men were killed or wounded while using them. What I have written is true of that part of the line occupied by R. D. Johnston's brigade (N. C. brigade, near old Blandford) opposite Fort Stedman, in March, 1865; and I believe it is true, substantially, of the entire Confederate line Northeast and East of Petersburg.

The losses behind the breastworks were negligible. General Grant made no attempt to batter down with artillery fire our intrenchments, and the mortar fire was directed in the main against the forts and salients. In considering the use made of artillery in the late Great War—that it was more relied upon than was the infantry—it is surprising that both sides in the War of 1861-65 should have failed to rely upon its efficacy or even to test thoroughly its effects. If General Grant had concentrated his artillery upon any section of the Confederate intrenchments around Petersburg, they would have been levelled in a few hours. They could not have withstood the fire of concentrated and continuous heavy field artillery aided by 32-pound rifle guns.

My own service as soldier was exclusively in the Army of Northern Virginia, and in its operations in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, I being never in any of its detached operations; but I enjoyed what I think was a unique opportunity to learn much of the military operations and the morale of both officers and privates of the Western Armies of the Confederacy from the most remarkable leader, with the possible exception of General Sherman, who was developed on either side in the fighting west of the Alleghanies.

As a struggling young lawyer in the early seventies, in Memphis, Tennessee, I was junior counsel in a suit to which General Nathan Bedford Forrest was a party. I met him a few times during the proceedings in court, and our acquaintance grew. He had an office in the Planters' and Mechanics' Bank, in the half-basement rooms, and I passed that place each day. He would sometimes see me and call me in for a chat. He was particularly

interested in what I would tell him about the fighting of the cavalry in the armies in Virginia. He would laugh heartily when I would describe the charging of squadrons with drawn sabres. He said that, in his command, he had learned not to rely upon the sabre; and when he fought his men mounted he would get to close quarters and use seven-shooter revolvers. The dismounted cavalry used, of course, the rifle or carbine.

In one conversation he gave me a vivid description of the surrender of Fort Donelson. He said at the end of the second day's fight, Grant was badly whipped and that he knew it; that that night he (Forrest) lay down inside of the breastworks among his troopers, and after he had slept awhile, a messenger came to take him to headquarters. Upon his arrival there, he said he found the three generals, Floyd (in command), Pillow, and Buckner, sitting around a small table lighted by two candles, in close consultation. They told him that they had made up their minds to surrender the fort and the garrison after taking off as many as they could in two steamboats then at anchor at the fort. General Forrest told me that he expressed to them the utmost surprise, telling them that Grant had been badly whipped, and he had no doubt that he had withdrawn his lines from the positions where they were when the battle ceased, and intended to take his command out of the lines.\* He also told me that General Floyd remarked that he could not surrender himself, that the United States Government had charged him with shipping munitions of war to the South while Secretary of War, and would probably hang him if they caught him; that General Pillow said he also was going to escape on the boat because he had been a former officer in the Union army, and he feared trouble if he should be captured; that General Buckner, the junior officer of

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\*My attention has been called to the striking similarity of my version of General Forrest's account of the surrender of Fort Donelson to that given by Doctor Wyeth in his very able *Life of General Forrest*. Strange as it may seem, I had never seen the book. I can only reiterate my vivid recollection of General Forrest's manner, language and even words. I recall that he used the word "whipped" repeatedly, for "defeated" or "beaten"; and it is interesting that Dr. Wyeth uses the same word. This may show that his and my versions go back to the same source, viz., the General's own account.

the three, at the request of the other two, remained, and made the surrender the next day. Forrest led his own troops out to safety. I remember he spoke in high terms of Buckner's character and courage.

General Forrest talked to me with the utmost freedom of the leading figures of the Western Army. I recall very vividly the conversation in which he gave me a full account of General Van Dorn's death, which he got from the lips of the slayer, a prominent physician. It happened in this way: Van Dorn, who was said to be the handsomest man in the Confederate Army, while in camp in 1863, with his cavalry division, near the physician's home, became his guest on numerous occasions. The doctor's wife was as handsome and attractive, as a woman, as Van Dorn was as a man. She was much younger than her husband, and becoming fascinated with Van Dorn, formed improper relations with him. The husband was a well-bred man, and, incapable of suspecting his wife of treachery, remained in ignorance of the liaison, for some weeks, until one day, when his faithful negro servant and driver, while the doctor was on a visit to a patient, informed him of the conditions at home, at the same time saying that he expected that his master would kill him for giving the information. As a matter of fact, the doctor, a passionate and high tempered man, took his knife from his pocket, and was in the act of opening it, as he said, to cut the slave's throat, when he suddenly changed his resolution, and determined to enquire into the matter. The next day he laid the ruse of a visit for a couple of days on professional business; but late that night returned, and entered his house and his bedroom, where he found Van Dorn. He helped Van Dorn to dress, escorted him to the door, and saw him safely off for his camp. The next day, about twelve o'clock, the doctor rode over to Van Dorn's headquarters, mounted on a black horse, celebrated for his fleetness and enduring qualities, and dismounting, called upon Van Dorn in his tent. He drew a piece of paper from his pocket, on which was written the confession of Van Dorn that he had been the guest and professed friend of the physician; that he had abused his confidence and debauched his wife, and that he was a disgrace to the Confederate army and not worthy of wearing that uniform. He demanded that Van Dorn sign it. After the general had read the



paper, he declined to affix his name, saying: "You lost your chance last night, when I was in your power." The physician replied that he had another chance, and pulling out his watch, laid it on a table, and told him that if he did not sign in three minutes he would blow his brains out. When the time was up, and the paper unsigned, the doctor made good his threat, and Van Dorn lay dead in his tent, in the midst of thousands of his troopers. The physician instantly mounted his horse and spurred to get out of the Confederate lines. He was pursued by picked squadrons, but the black horse distanced all pursuit; and the doctor rode into Nashville, then occupied by Union troops.

General Forrest's physique was absolutely the most powerful I have ever seen. He was—or so impressed me as being—over six feet in height, weighing perhaps one hundred and seventy-five pounds, with a sinewy build and co-ordination of nerves and muscles which gave the impression of thinness. His complexion, naturally swarthy, was also tanned by his outdoor life. His hair was very slightly tinged with gray, his mustache and chin-whiskers vigorous and full, but very carefully trimmed. The well-known portrait of him is exactly as I recall him. His health when I knew him seemed perfect; though he had a rapid decline in health and died soon after I left Memphis.

General Forrest's early education was defective, but his strong intellectual endowments and the force of his character, accompanied by many attractive qualities, procured a wider field for his powers than was afforded him in the community where he was born, and amid the social influences that surrounded him. Years before the Civil War his social relations had extended to the educated and well-informed classes, and his business connections and interests were broader than local. If he did not write English in good style, as is alleged by some historians, the same criticism cannot be made of his conversational faculty. His voice was sonorous and well-modulated, his manner easy and dignified, his words well-chosen and well-pronounced, and his ideas logically and clearly expressed. His vocabulary was quite large because of his experience and association, and he had a fine knowledge of the use and meaning of words. He was not educated in books, but his culture was both liberal and unobtrusive.

## CHAPTER V.

### The Confederate Soldier—His Privations and *Esprit de Corps*.

**P**RE-EMINENT among all the effects of army life upon me was my rapid mental development. Thrown as I was into close association with men of all classes and callings where the passions had free opportunities for their display, I learned from actual experience and observations the motives which influenced men in their conduct toward each other. A man's duties were imposed upon me from sixteen years and I began at that age to act and think as a man. When I entered the service of course I had no real idea of what war was. Of a mercurial and sanguine temperament, I partook of Southern sentiment and was anxious for the experience of battle.

Young as I was, I fully appreciated that unquestioned obedience to military orders was necessary to the discipline and efficiency of armies; and I have always thought that the most beneficial effect produced on me by my military service was that of the willing subjection of my mind and conduct to the commands of recognized authority. The discipline I underwent, however, had the effect, in my subsequent study and practice, of causing me to accept, as a matter of course, many tenets of the common law and provisions of statutory law simply because they had been "prescribed by the chief authorities in the State commanding what is right and prohibiting what is wrong", which have since been wisely abrogated or repealed.

The Confederate soldier, very often, even in battle, acted independently of and without regard for his commanding officers, and he was terribly given to straggling; but he was never guilty of insubordination in camp or on the march.

The *esprit de corps* of the Confederate armies was not maintained through discipline. In fact the Confederate soldier never became disciplined. As an individual he was not only brave, but pugnacious. He was always ready to "charge" the enemy in the open or behind entrenchments, but he never got the advantage of shoulder to shoulder mechanical movement with its attendant confidence and power. He despised the drill, the parade, and all

camp duty. Many a boy would go on the sick-list and take offensive drugs before he would go out to drill. He disliked uniform and all trappings that made him look like everybody else. His great hatred was toward the cap. He admired the old-fashioned slouch hat. In the summer he threw away everything but his gun and cartridge box, and relied upon the fall campaign to get his winter supply of blankets and overcoat from the enemy. He seldom obeyed the orders of the inferior officers and always thought he had as much, or more, sense than they—and in this last surmise he was too often correct. General D. H. Hill, in the address I have referred to, says that he had no doubt that the Southerner would have submitted to discipline if it had been uniformly required of all; but that so many of the officers were seeking political preferment that they were afraid of the after effects of firm discipline, if enforced, upon their political future; and, they neglecting it, others could not successfully enforce it. The General was in a position to know.

However that may have been, it is certain that in some instances there was so much ignorance of tactics and so little experience in the art of war on the part of the officers, that the lack of discipline and order may, to some extent at least, be attributed to that source. For instance, it was told of an Alabama colonel that, in the Battle of Seven Pines, as he was marching his men by the flank, a fire so hot that most veterans would have flinched under it was opened upon them by the enemy, when General Rodes rode up and gave the order for attack. The Colonel looked very much embarrassed, not understanding that the General, of course, intended for him first to form his men into line, and shouted, "General, do you mean for me to charge end-ways?" One of North Carolina's well-known officers, when he wished to form his men from single to double file would holloa, "Make two rows, boys," "Make two rows, boys!" And when he wished his men to wheel by company to the right or left, he would shout, "Come around like a gate, boys, Come around!"

Straggling and the want of respect for his company officers and their orders made large numbers of Confederate soldiers inefficient and a source of extreme anxiety to superior officers in all active movements of the armies. Straggling prevented a complete Confederate success at Second Manassas. and caused drawn

battles at Shiloh and Sharpsburg. General Lee, in a letter to President Davis written a few days after the last-mentioned battle, said that desertion and straggling had caused his retreat from Maryland; and he also complained of the defects in the army regulations concerning those vices. He wrote that the morning after the Sharpsburg battle four brigades numbered only 100, 120 and 300 men each, respectively. The losses of those brigades in battle had not been unusual. General Bragg, in his report of the part his corps took in the battle of Shiloh, stated that the want of discipline and the "large proportion of stragglers resulting weakened our forces and kept the superior and staff officers constantly engaged in the duties of file-closers."

The explanation of the fealty of the great bulk of Confederate soldiers to their Government, their unparalleled fidelity to the military arm, and their bravery in battle, during the last two years of the war, especially, must be found elsewhere than in mechanism or fear of their superior officers.

I cannot even now, with the knowledge gained from my army experience, as well as from study and reflection since, fully comprehend how fidelity and service to so remarkable a degree were rendered by so large a part of the Confederate soldiers the last year and a half of the War, though to many minds causes may be suggested that may account for the phenomenon. Nearly all of them felt during that stage of the contest that the cause was lost, and yet they continued to fight with conspicuous bravery, suffering the while most serious losses in offensive battles of great magnitude.

In fact, the great Lee-Grant Campaign of 1864, beginning May 5th, and ending in July with Grant's investment of Petersburg, attested Lee's most brilliant generalship and the Army of Northern Virginia's most devoted service and most splendid courage. That campaign on Lee's part was of the defensive-offensive type. The initial battle on the 5th of May was on Ewell's aggressive. Longstreet made a brilliant and successful attack on the morning of the 6th, and Hill assailed the Federal column that had crossed the North Anna on the 23rd. After Hancock's success of the early morning at the Salient at Spottsylvania, the Confederates took the offensive. They were the attacking party even at Appomattox; but it is noteworthy that in

one hour after the surrender there was manifested throughout the rank and file a spirit of silent submission to the result, and a feeling that it could not have been otherwise.

Whatever explanation may be offered must be subject to the predication that the real interests of the overwhelming numbers of the Confederate soldiers who carried rifles were not involved in the war, and they knew it; and that in many instances they had been treated by their Government with oppression and unjust discrimination. In the beginning of the War nearly all the males in the South of military age marched to the front under the excitement of the hour. The rich, the influential, the slaveholder, the College and University men and students, and the professional men of all kinds, then stood in the ranks side by side with the men of the other classes of the people.

When the Confederate first took the field he gloried in getting wet and cold and hungry, believing he was thereby serving his country as a good soldier. He really believed that he could whip six "Yankees". He wanted a wound and felt despondent at the idea of going home safe and sound and having the eternal praises sung to him of some comrade who had lost a leg or an arm, or who had had a sabre slash on his forehead. He thought the war would last only a few months and he was fearful lest one good battle should settle it and he not be present with a chance to make a record. He found out ere long that wounds would come to him without his seeking them, and that a stone wall or a stump of a tree was not to be despised when bullets were flying.

But a great exodus homeward and to bomb-proof positions in the rear and to State and Government sinecures from the armies of those known in the South as the "better class" set in after the Conscription Act of April, 1862, under its substitute clauses, the exemption laws, and the rulings of the several Departments of Government creating hundreds of petty and useless offices, civil and military. An army of stalwart young men could have been organized of those snugly tucked away in the Quartermaster's, Commissary, Ordnance and Medical Departments in the field and at home. Thousands of the same stripe found refuge at the headquarters of colonels and generals on some professional pretext. Where laws and rulings were not clear, shrewd law-



yers reaped fruitful harvests of fees paid by the influential classes to secure exemptions and details. Throughout the last two and a half years of the War, there could only now and then be found in the ranks, with a rifle in his hands, a man of the rich and influential classes, and comparatively few slaveholders or sons of slaveholders. Such few were mostly from the agricultural communities and sons of small farmers whose holdings were insignificant. The "incomparable infantry" of the Southern armies after the close of the campaign of 1862 was composed in greater part of the poorer classes of the people, craftsmen, apprentices and employees of the tradesmen, and laborers, skilled and unskilled, of the cities and towns.

In addition, there were other conditions unfavorable to discipline and to the development and maintenance of the fighting and patriotic spirit of the Confederate soldiers of 1864-5.

They had no warm admiration for their Government. The president was neither loved nor admired by them. Many practices involving their personal rights carried on under the shadows of the government offices were not only impolitic but unjust and tyrannical. If they, perchance, should get furloughs from the army in Virginia, they disliked to pass through Richmond because of the needless humiliation they were subjected to by the passport and military system under Winder. On their return to the army they were treated as criminals and deserters. The "Bull-pen", a brick dungeon on Cary Street, was the prison home of returning furloughed soldiers until a sufficient number had been gathered in to justify an armed guard to take them well on their way to their destination. Thousands died in the hospitals from gangrenous infections in cases where the wounds were not serious when inflicted; and thousands from the various fevers, neglect, and want of proper diet. Recoveries in such cases would have been almost certain if the patients had been furloughed to their homes where proper attention and food could have been given. The excuse in such cases pleaded by the Government was that all on sick leave overstayed their limit and many never returned.

Rations were unnecessarily scant, and the paymaster was seldom seen. When he did appear the signing of the payrolls and the receipt for the eleven dollars per month but emphasized dis-

gust with the whole beggarly proceeding. A month's pay would barely buy the soda to lighten the musty flour. The balance went to the sutler for apples and ginger cakes. Three-fourths of a pound of inferior flour and a pound of poor beef or half pound of an almost invariably half-rancid hog meat was the standard ration. There were no vegetables, no fruits, no milk, fresh or canned, no butter nor cheese, no sweets; and soap was so seldom seen that General Lee, himself, made requisition for this, today, indispensable article for the use of his soldiers.

When the army had scurvy in the winter of 1862-63, I, myself, with details of hundreds of men and army wagons gathered on the bottoms of the Rappahannock the water cress, wild onions, and other raw salads for the sick of the army. In winter-quarters I have known of volunteer raids by squads headed by a captain or a lieutenant into the Union lines for the express purpose of capturing articles of choice food in the haversacks and bivouacs of the picket posts. In the lull of battle I have seen Confederates take their lives into their hands by crawling into "no man's land" to take from the dead bodies of the Union soldiers their haversacks and canteens, bullets from the enemy's skirmishers and sharpshooters plowing up the dust all around them.

An amusing anecdote was told of a wounded Confederate—a son of Erin—at the battle of Hatcher's Run, in February, 1865. General Gordon, with much energy, was trying to rally his broken ranks, and being near the wounded man who was on his way to the rear, cried out to him, "What is the matter with you, sir?" The Irishman replied: "Faith, and as for me, I have a hole in me stomach as big as your fist." But moved by Gordon's stirring appeal, he himself stopped short off, and with his cap in his hand turned on the enemy, at the same time shouting, "Charge 'em, boys! Charge 'em, boys! They have 'chase' in their haversacks!"

The clothing furnished the Confederate troops was most limited in quantity and most inferior in quality; and there was no change, summer or winter. "Roundabouts" and tight fitting trousers generally of all woolen gray, or cotton jeans, were the private's dress on the march to Gettysburg, in the July and August suns around Petersburg, and in the freezing winter battles or marches. In the main, the army's supply of overcoats was obtained from the Union prisoners and dead. And through it



all the Confederate troops knew that there was enough cloth and uniforms already made in the many Confederate depots to clothe the army. When Lee's surrender took place, there was at Greensboro, North Carolina, within less than 50 miles of Lee's army and almost in sight of Joe Johnston's, enough ready made suits and cloth to supply all the Confederate armies. General D. H. Hill, whose association with the Southern armies was as close and as wide as that of any other Confederate officer, in an address before the Southern Historical Society said: "From first to last our army was the worst equipped, the worst fed, the worst clothed and the worst organized army in the world; that of our enemy was the best equipped, the best organized, the best cared for, and the most pampered army of the 19th Century."

The resentment of the Confederate soldier because of food privations was aggravated every time he passed the quarters of the Commissaries, Quartermasters and Medical staff, on the march or in winter quarters. Here he saw abundant signs of good living. The alcoholic liquors bought by the Government in large quantities for medical purposes, much of which was sent to the army, got no further than the quarters mentioned above. I never saw a drop of spirits used medicinally in Lee's army among the privates in my whole service, and I have never heard a private in the army say that he ever saw a drop used in that way. I do not, of course, say that all the quartermasters, commissaries and surgeons and their assistants used strong drink; but it can be truthfully said that the majority probably did; and they dispensed it among their friends.

But if the Southern soldiers were indifferent in their feelings toward their Government, they respected and honored their military leaders, who praised their valor and shared their dangers. For General Jackson they had always cheers in battle and in camp, and the highest admiration of his triumphs and leadership. Their feeling for General Lee cannot be described. Love for the man, reverence for his character, unlimited confidence in his generalship, and awe for his personal greatness, were the tributes the soldiers paid to the most remarkable person both in the qualities of the statesman and the soldier who was discovered or developed by the War. The troops never cheered Gen-

eral Lee.\* The Southern armies for the last two years of the War lived as it were on his breath. His death, disability, resignation or removal would have caused the collapse of the armies and the Government.

The great soldier's admiration for his men was as great as theirs for him. He said to General Wise of the men around Petersburg in the last months of the struggle, "The men of this War who will deserve the most honor and gratitude are not the men of rank but the men of the ranks". And to a foreign officer who was visiting at his headquarters, he said, "I am ashamed for you to see my poor ragged men in camp or on parade, but I would be glad for all the world to see them on the field of battle."

The Confederate soldier, notwithstanding his poor external surroundings was polite in his manner and chivalric in sentiment, and he always had the right thing to say. He greatly loved and respected good women, and he admired courage in men.

Beautiful stories were told of two young fellows who had been wounded in battle. One of the lads, on being badly shot in the face, turned instantly to his Chaplain and said, "Do you think she will love me now?". The other, dangerously and painfully hurt, was being nursed in a Richmond hospital by the Ladies' Relief Association. One day the attendant, a pretty girl, heard him cry out in a rack of pain, "O! My Lord!", and coming to him said, "I heard you call upon the name of the Lord; I am one of His daughters. Is there anything I can ask Him for you?" With a quick glance, he answered, "Ask Him to make me His son-in-law."

As a rule the Confederate was cheerful. His wit and his humor, the soul's antidote for unhappiness, lighted up his dark environment and dispelled his "fits of blues", which though common were of short duration; and the Southern soldier, even of 1864-65, notwithstanding his unhappy mental condition and his

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\*Astounding as this statement may appear I can testify to the fact of my own knowledge and it is verified by General William R. Cox, a participant in nearly every battle in which the Army of Northern Virginia was engaged, in his sketch of the Anderson-Ramseur-Cox Brigade, North Carolina Regimental Histories, Vol. IV, p. 443.

wretched material situation, preserved his courtesy, his chivalry and his humor, a psychological manifestation apparently contradictory, but really logically interrelated. He was making the best of a desperate situation. Some authentic instances of his humor which, with one exception, I have never seen in print will be of interest.

General Ben Butler, it was said, was intimately associated with "spoons" during the war, and he was very much disliked by the fighting soldiers of both armies. On the battle field at Spottsylvania, one of the privates of Hagood's South Carolina brigade, in attempting to inspect what appeared to be a dead Federal soldier, was astonished to hear the supposed dead man say, "What do you want?" The Confederate, amazed, said, "I only wanted to swap spoons with you." The dying man replied, "I have no spoons: You must think I belong to Butler's Army."

The incident reminds me of a gruesome custom and a rule of conduct adopted by the Confederate in respect to the right of taking from the dead bodies of the Union soldiers whatever personal property might be found on them. As long as "breath was in the body" it was sacrilegious to touch it, but at the moment of the last breath the captor began his search. The Confederate who reached the body in the first instance had the first right. On the day after the battle of Fredericksburg my regiment occupied a line on the field over which the troops had fought. Many of the Union dead and mortally wounded were found there, and amongst the latter was a colonel. A member of Company B of my regiment (Royster) was his lawful captor, and patiently waited some hours for the death of the wounded soldier, in the meantime warning all who came too curiously near that his claim was supreme. Royster had seen that the colonel wore a watch and had a pocketbook. In the course of the day the poor man stretched himself and heaved a half-sigh; and Royster, believing that all was over, commenced to take his watch from its pocket, when the dying man said: "Friend, can't you wait a few minutes longer? I am very near the end." Royster, much confused, taking off his hat and making a low bow, answered in his politest and most sympathetic tone and manner, "I beg your pardon. I'm damned if I didn't think you was dead."

At the same battle, a young staff officer, as full of himself as he was of liquor, was cavorting and plunging around and showing off, mounted upon the poorest old broken-down horse that ever man got astride—every rib was sticking out. He kept it up until it grew tiresome, when Private W. E. Darnell, always bright, jolly and good natured, flashed his quizzical eye upon him and said most seriously, "Mister, I'd like to get that job after the battle is over." With great pompousness the horseman pulled the poor beast on his haunches, and thundered out, "What do you mean, sir? What job are you talking about?" "To weatherboard your horse, I see the scantling is all up", was Darnell's reply.

Darnell got off another good thing, at Orange, it was, I think. He had gone over to the sutler's, some distance off, to get a piece of tobacco, and on his return met a visiting preacher in the road. The gentleman of the cloth halted and said in a very solemn and imposing manner, "What command do you belong to?" "I belong to the 12th North Carolina, Rodes' Division. What Army do you belong to?", replied Darnell, looking at the preacher's long coat, big breeches and high beaver hat. The preacher answered in his most patronizing and devout tone, "I belong to the Army of the Lord." As quick as a flash, Darnell said, "Well, my friend, you have got a d——d long way from headquarters."

Colonel Vance (afterwards Governor), who led the 26th North Carolina at Malvern Hill, said that in the onset the men, repulsed under a terrific rain of shot and shell, lay down in a field of plowed ground, between the rows, for protection, but unfortunately the furrows ran up towards the batteries and served as troughs for the projectiles. One fellow, long, lank and red-headed, said to him, "Colonel, them cussed Virginians have plowed this field the wrong way."

My brother, Robert Cheek Montgomery ("Bob") combined in himself, perhaps more completely than any other private soldier I ever knew, most of the characteristics of the Confederate soldier. He had all their unquestioning confidence, their cheeriness, their devil-may-care attitude, though unconscious of it all. Indeed, he was far more typical than I.

Bob was totally unlike me in personal appearance as well as

mind, being a typical Cheek (our mother's family, of English descent) in his short and stout figure, swarthy complexion, and a very pronounced strain of melancholy in his make-up, with the consequent impulse to "spree" periodically as an escape from it. A very strong and well grown boy at fifteen, he had been accepted for the infantry before I, his senior by little more than a year, had changed from the cavalry to that branch of the service.

I have had occasion to tell of my own seriousness, and that of most of the men I was thrown with; but Bob totally lacked any such feeling. To him the war was from first to last a glorious lark. He was never congenial with his step-mother, with whom my relations were affectionate, and the War released him from an unhappy domestic situation. As I look back upon him, he was the complete representative of the stuff of which irresistible armies have been made in the world's history. He only asked "Where are the Yankees?", and nothing could hold him back. His associates were not at all the same as mine, and he fell into a dissipated set, and acquired the habit of deep drinking. Most of his associates were good soldiers, fortunately, and his character, morally, never suffered. I have seen him go into battle palpably under the influence of liquor, which, however, he had not taken to muster up "Dutch courage", but out of sheer good fellowship. I shall never forget the sinking of the heart with which I often looked for him after great battles, and his wonderment when I would almost break down upon finding him. I came to see that my feelings toward him were fatherly, rather than brotherly; and I think he came to be afraid of me, though he always loved me devotedly. I think my turn for books and for philosophic thinking on many subjects further scared him. I often felt, with deep humility, that he thought of me as of some superior being.

At First Cold Harbor, Bob received a serious wound which left him a stiff arm for life, and a more serious one at the Horse-Shoe Angle at Spottsylvania. I think I saved his life there by discovering him, through the ignorance or neglect of the surgeons in the appalling number of wounded to be treated, very white and almost unconscious from loss of blood. I lifted his

blanket only to discover it and the ground on which he lay absolutely soaked in his blood.

A more cheerful memory which long amused campfires was that of Bob, rather the worse for drink, having lain down on pine rails too near the campfire, waking to discover himself and his blanket in flames, and dashing to the nearest creek like a meteor and plunging in. He had a remarkably sweet voice, played the banjo well, and was a leader in singing and in minstrels both in the army and after he returned home. He was also an excellent actor in comedies and farces; being especially good in "Major Jones' Courtship", and in the scene older readers may recall where the Major is hung up in a bag at his sweetheart's door.

After Appomattox, Bob, like most of the Confederate soldiers who migrated to Texas, had in his mind the vision of a new country and a fresh civilization, and also a disposition to get as far as possible from the Government at Washington. He thought too that the change would bring speedier relief from the remembrance of Appomattox and the terrible days leading up to it. There were also for such men allurements as fascinating and an excitement over the prospects as intense as were ever the riches of the Montezumas to the Spaniards of the conquests, or the gold fields of California to the Forty-Niners.



## CHAPTER VI.

### **The Constituency of the Confederate Army 1863-64.**

**T**O weld such diverse elements as made up the Confederate armies of 1863-64 into effective armies in a warfare destructive, protracted, and waged not for their own benefit but really against their interest, was a masterpiece. But the processes were simple and can be explained, provided a correct view of the social and political life of the South be taken into account.

In the first place the individuals composing the Confederate armies the last two years of the War were, in very large proportion, illiterate, the Public School system of the South being then very little more than a mere pretense, and almost entirely ignorant of affairs and matters outside of their own township or county. Most of the classes from whom the private soldiers were drawn unquestioningly acquiesced in their lots. All the information they acquired was derived from the ministers of religion and the politicians. The preachers, almost to a man, taught them that poverty and riches were ordained of God, that men were born into the conditions of life intended by Divine Providence; that the same Power had decreed that they were there to remain except in rare cases of unusual gifts; and that slavery had always existed and was morally right, as was clearly shown in the Bible and implied in the teachings of Jesus Himself. The politicians in the South, as a rule, were not born in the ruling or "Planter" class, although many of the most influential of them married into that class and adopted their views. They were the agents by whom the ranks from which they themselves sprung were held in political and social servitude to the aristocratic class.

The politicians, at all times and everywhere, never lost an opportunity to inculcate the doctrine of States Rights, and to picture the Union of the States and its Government as hostile to the interests of the South and of secondary rank in point of political fealty and obligation. To the last they taught that secession was being resorted to under a clear constitutional right, and only incidentally for the protection of slavery. They taught that the Northern States—controlled by the "Black Republicans"—intended, if they could, to "free the Negro", and thereby



to make him the social and political equal of the whites, thus menacing especially the poor whites in their rights and privileges. That feature of the situation was strongly and skillfully dwelt upon.

In the large slaveholding areas nearly all the poor whites were secessionists because of the overpowering influence of the planters and the wealthy and prosperous trading class. Historians write that the mountain districts of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama were for the Union, but that even there the belief that the object of the National Government was to liberate the slaves, and the fear of the consequences of such action, drove many of them into the Confederate armies. Robert Toombs in his celebrated speech made in the United States Senate in January, 1861, referring to the mountain population of his State, said, "A very large portion of the people of Georgia own none of them (the slaves). In the mountains there are comparatively but few of them; but no part of our people are more loyal to their race and country than our bold mountain population; and every flash of the electric wires brings me cheering news from our mountain tops and our valleys, that these sons of Georgia are excelled by none of their countrymen in loyalty to the right, the honor, and the glory of the Commonwealth. They say, and well say, this is our question; we want no Negro equality, no Negro Citizenship; we want no mongrel race to degrade our own; and as one man they would meet you with the sword in one hand and the torch in the other". The same view, though more temperately expressed, was held by the author of the *Life of General (Bishop) Polk*, who wrote, "The most bitter opponents of Negro enfranchisement and Negro equality were the rank and file in the Confederate Army. They were not as a rule the men who owned slaves but they represented the class upon whose heels the enfranchised Negro would inevitably tread."

My own comradeship with the Confederate soldiers during the whole war was substantially corroborative of the statements of the orator and the historian. The greatest incentive that nerved their arms was the belief that the success of the Union cause would result in putting them on a plane of social and political

equality with the slave race of the South. They knew that slavery had been a great curse to their class, but they also felt that emancipation and enfranchisement would render their condition even more unbearable. As to the result of the War, the best type of the Confederate soldier felt that the poor people of the South were to be the great sufferers in any event; that he would not be benefited in any contingency; and although he believed that Confederate failure was inevitable, he would rather die than desert. A hundred thousand and more Confederates did desert, but—most of them—most probably from despair and on urgent calls from their families for relief from want and suffering.

In the interest of truth, however, I must add that numbers did actually desert simply to escape service and its dangers. An illustration will be interesting. On a visit, in 1897, to the Gettysburg battlefield, I was standing on the Mummasburg Road trying to locate the gap in the Federal line between the divisions of Robertson and Schurz through which Doles' Georgia brigade entered. I asked two men who were passing in a buggy if they could aid me in my quest. The youngest man, apparently between fifty and sixty, said that I was just in the gap. I thanked him, and said in a tone which he evidently misunderstood, "Why, what are you doing up here in this country? You are a Georgian or a North Carolinian!" To my surprise, he answered that I must be acquainted with his antecedents, and intended to affront him; that he was ready to resent the insult even if he had been a Confederate deserter. I told him that I knew nothing of his history, and assured him that I was a man of peace and no longer the fighting boy that I was when at Gettysburg in 1863.

He then, giving his name, explained that up to and including the battle of Gettysburg he had been a member of Scales' North Carolina Brigade, 16th Regiment, enlisted from Buncombe County. He asked me if I was familiar with the general battleground; and, on being told that I was, and was wounded a few hundred yards from where we were conversing, he pointed in the direction of the "Reynolds' Woods", and said that with his brigade he advanced from about that point and fought through the battle of the first day and also that of the third; that, being satisfied that the War was decided there against the South, that the proba-

bilities were that he would be killed or disabled if he continued with the army, and that it was "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight", he lay still when his brigade was ordered to withdraw on the night of the fourth, and surrendered to the "Yankees" the next morning. He said further that a number of his company had agreed to act with him, but that when the time came they, through fear of being recaptured or ashamed to desert, followed their command on the retreat. Continuing, he said that many of his comrades, some of them having been engaged in almost all of the important battles of the War, often discussed among themselves the question of desertion from every standpoint.

The white laboring people of the South had been driven to the wall in competition with the skilled and the unskilled slave labor, and many of them hated both master and slaves on that account, though compelled to restrain their feelings towards the powerful slave owners. Thousands and tens of thousands of the stronger and more ambitious of the poor whites of the slaveholding districts, appreciating their insuperable handicap because of slavery and its effects, emigrated to the great North-West, particularly to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, where they reared families and made successes of life. In due time they sent back sons and kinsmen with guns in their hands to destroy slavery and the slave power. The younger emigrants and the descendants of the earlier ones from the States of North and South Carolina, Virginia, Georgie, Alabama and Tennessee, serving in the ranks of the Union armies, were the only Federal soldiers who were ever the equals of the Confederates, and to their prowess is fundamentally due the success of the Union armies. They were the men who composed the victorious western army of the Union and made possible the careers of Grant and Sherman.

Aside from political and economic considerations, the social as well as the professional influence of the clergy, the wholehearted encouragement of the womanhood of the South for the fighter, their fierce denunciation and social ostracism of "the slacker", and the universal sectional hate of the North taught through many years, re-enforced by sectional pride and a warlike spirit traditional to his race, all contributed powerfully to

holding the Confederate soldier to his colors. All classes, of course, were drawn together in most tender sympathy by the appalling losses from battle and disease.

Of great interest is the contrast between the attitude of woman during the World War and that of the Civil War, 1861-65. The chief part taken by the women of the Confederacy was in stirring up the war feeling and maintaining that spirit, and through "sewing societies" furnishing clothing and socks to the troops. In the War of 1861-65 there was scarcely a woman employed in any department of the Civil Government, and not one in the manufacture of arms or ammunition. Only a few were employed in the base-hospitals or those in the cities and towns, and these few only in the pharmaceutical and culinary departments. The first and only visit for service of women to Lee's army in time of battle that I ever heard of was at Spottsylvania in May 1864, when a few nurses from Richmond, under some charitable organization, came to one of the field hospitals to nurse the wounded Confederates. The incident created great discussion and surprise. The wives, mothers and sisters, as true and devoted womanhood as any age and country ever produced, never dreamed of going to the scene of battle. Their hearts were bleeding over the news of slaughter and wounds, and yet they patiently waited at their homes to receive the dead bodies of the loved ones or to welcome and nurse their wounded.

After the battle of Gettysburg, the fall of Vicksburg, and the failure of attempts at a peace conference, not only were the people at home disheartened, but after the battle of Gettysburg and the fall of Vicksburg the army became despondent, and desertions began on a menacing scale. To restore the drooping spirits of the soldiers and to check desertions, Governor Vance of North Carolina visited Lee's army in the Spring of 1864, and made a series of addresses (March 26-April 3) avowedly for the benefit of the North Carolina troops, but really for that of the whole army.

Governor Vance knew full well—no man better—the soldiers' state of mind and the frightful ordeal of the battles through which they were soon to pass; and, full of sympathy for them, he spoke seriously, eloquently, tenderly. His anecdotes were not such as

he had used, with masterly effect, in his political campaigns to provoke laughter and to inflame partisan zeal by ridiculing and satirizing his opponents; rather did he now appeal to the high emotions of the soul, dwelling with nobility of thought and diction upon the high devotion of men who had met and were to meet adversity, misfortune, and even death with heroism, for love of country, friends, and homes. Patriotism, fidelity to comrades, reverence for the memory of those who had given their lives, scorn for those who would betray a trust, assurance of the gratitude of their countrymen, affectionate appreciation of the bravery, the patience, the services of the womanhood of the South, and the horrors of subjugation, were his themes.

Immense assemblages from the different divisions and brigades met the speaker. General Lee encouraged these meetings and was present at more than one of them. Generals Stuart and Gordon heard the Governor many times; it was reported that General Stuart said that Vance's speeches placed him amongst the foremost of the great orators, judging from the effects of his speeches. Never was oratory more effective. The courage of the soldiers was revived and thousands resolved to fight it out to a finish.

On one of these occasions at Taylorsville, where my regiment was on detached service guarding the bridges over the North and South Anna Rivers, the crowd was so dense just around the speaker's stand that a man could not move hand or foot. I had forgotten to take a chew of tobacco from my mouth, and being unable to eject or to swallow the amber fluid, undertook to relieve myself of it by spitting unobserved on the back of a soldier just in front of me. He detected me and threatened to "fix" me after the speaking was over. When the Governor closed his speech, I apologized fully and told him I hoped he was satisfied with my explanation. "Why, man", he cried, "I have forgotten all about it! Let it go! I want to fight the Yankees!"

Another cause of the reanimation of Lee's army was the religious movement contemporaneous with the efforts of the great orator, the most remarkable, I believe, in all history, and attended with even greater effect upon the men of Lee's army. It extended through every brigade and division. That movement was



so wonderful as a psychological manifestation, and so important in its practical effects upon the soldiers of Lee's army and the Southern country generally, that a special reference to it is pertinent.

By far the greater number of the soldiers of the Confederate army, in Virginia, for the first months of the war, reflected in their lives the virtues of home and religious influences. But, the long inactivity after the battle of Manassas was followed by demoralization; and the social evils common to most armies ran riot through the camp. Drunkenness, profanity and gambling were so common with officers and men as to excite no remark.

But the disasters to the cause in the beginning of the Spring of 1862, the sanguinary Seven Days Battles around Richmond, the battles of Second Manassas and Sharpsburg with their appalling losses of each in killed and maimed, brought about a moral and religious reaction. Revivals of religion broke out in the lower valley of Virginia in some of the brigades of the army after its retreat from Sharpsburg, and in several divisions around Fredericksburg, in the fall and winter of 1862-63, which were only interrupted by the march of the army to Pennsylvania in the summer following and the great battle there. Many of the ablest and most prominent of the laymen who had been leaders of that revival were killed in that battle. The spirit of the movement was not extinguished, however, and upon the army's taking its position on the Rapidan, after its return from the Northern invasion, what is known in history as the Great Revival of the Rapidan set in with great power, and filled all the camps with religious emotion and enthusiasm.

The meetings, division, brigade, and regimental, were held generally at night, although day services were not unusual. The congregations often numbered thousands. These meetings were heartily encouraged by the commander of the army and by many of his most renowned generals.

It would be impossible to describe one of these night meetings in its surroundings and in its effects, so spectacular were they in appearance and so emotionally inspiring in reality. Amid the wild forests bordering the Rapidan Valley, often under the light of the full moon, aided by a few lights around the preacher's

stand, but oftener under a fitful light made by blazing lightwood knots on hundreds of tripods—stands with tops covered with earth placed on the sides and center of the audience, and sending up through the boughs towards the heavens great flames of light—were assembled masses of men seated in a circle on the ground, fringed around with a line of officers and soldiers two or three feet deep, all in solemn and devout worship of the great Father and God over all. Songs of praise and supplication from thousands of throats as majestic as the ocean's roar in a storm, and inspired by reverence, faith and confidence, filled everyone, even the most casual spectator, with enthusiasm and awe. The utmost solemnity and dignity pervaded the congregation, and so interesting were the entire services—hymns and prayer and a simple sermon—that no noise or confusion or leaving of individuals before the general dismissal ever occurred. Thousands and thousands of the men and hundreds of the officers were converted, and joined the various churches. The whole army was morally benefited, and could truthfully be said to be a Christian army. Everyone then recognized that the better Christian a man was the better soldier he was, or to put it concretely, the average man who was a Christian was a better soldier than the average man who was not.

The speeches of Governor Vance to the soldiers of Lee's army in the Spring of 1864 revived their drooping spirits and rekindled the smouldering fires of patriotism; but undoubtedly it was the religious fervor inspired by what is historically known as the Great Religious Revival of the Rapidan, with the still higher ideals of duty, of religious and moral convictions, that nerved the soldiers for the great struggle with the Union armies under General Grant in 1864, from the Wilderness, on to Spottsylvania Court House, thence to the South Anna, and on to Second Cold Harbor.

The same revival spirit attended that army in the trench warfare around Petersburg, on to the field of Appomattox, and from there to their homes. It is, to me, a most interesting study, how many ex-soldiers of my personal acquaintance entered the ministry of the several religious bodies.



## CHAPTER VII.

### **Appomattox and the Return Home.\***

#### *Lee's Farewell to His Soldiers.*

*You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that a Merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection. With an unceasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration for myself, I bid you all an affectionate farewell.*

R. E. LEE, *Gen'l.*

**A**PPOMATTOX to the historian is an event, not a place. The little village of that name in Southwestern Virginia which, on 9 April, 1865, consisted of a court house, jail, post-office and a few scattered houses, was not an interesting spot of earth; and only that which came to pass there, on that day, has brought the hamlet to the notice of the world.

Neither were the physical or material deeds done there on that day great of themselves. The event, if it could be considered as disconnected with its consequences and without relation to the past, would also be of trivial moment; only a few thousand ragged, starving soldiers, beaten in pitched battle, surrounded and captured after a week's retreat and an ever-aggressive pursuit by a powerful and watchful foe—that was all. But the captured were the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia; the captors the Army of the Potomac; and that, together with the consequences, raised the occurrence to the plane of world-history. There, was the death-scene of an army once formidable in numbers and so great in prestige that it added renown to its enemy who gave the mortal wound; and its great leader, by the act of furling the battle-flags of his regiments, conferred on his antagonist his highest title to fame.

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That army, during its four years of existence, had never been broken in battle, though out of all its battles it went on its way dripping with blood. It had always been chivalric in its treatment of prisoners and especially kind to such of them as were sick or wounded. It had always been scrupulous in its respect for womankind and most careful of the rights of private property. For three years, the flash from its musketry was a sheet of flame encircling the borders of the Confederacy and consuming like stubble fresh armies and fresh generals of its enemy; and twice bursting the bounds of its territory, it leaped into the heart of the enemy's country. It made immortal almost every hill and dale of the Old Dominion, and electrified the civilized world with its deeds of heroism; and though wounded nigh unto death at Gettysburg, it afterwards, at the Wilderness, at Spottsylvania, and at second Cold Harbor, against odds incalculable, performed prodigies of valor far in excess of any of its former achievements.

But the time was at hand when it became possible for these men, 60,000 in number, poorly fed, badly shod and without suitable clothing, and losing their strength even in their victories, to be driven back by 140,000 upon their capital for a last stand. Through the long siege of eight months, in the trenches around Petersburg, the survivors, in seasons of extreme heat and extreme cold, suffering from a want of food and clothes, maintained, yet without hope, their courage and their self-respect; and they finally left their post only upon an order from their great leader, and after they had repulsed a series of desperate assaults. For a week, on their retreat without rest, and hungry, they flung defiance at their enemies and responded with alacrity to every order to face their pursuers, until at last, at the end, they threw themselves upon their foes now blocking their way with a wail of despair drowned by the roar of artillery and the rattle of their rifles; and then,—

“The pennon droops that led the sacred band  
Along the crimson field.”

Thenceforward the Army of Northern Virginia lived only in history.

To the Southerners of that day Appomattox was the tomb of

their social aspirations, the sepulchre of their political hopes; for no people ever made nobler sacrifices for their convictions than they did for theirs; no people ever loved more devotedly, or more fully believed in, their cause, than did the Confederates in theirs; and their grief over the result was proportioned to their love and their faith.

I was then 20 years old, the February before, and a lieutenant of Company F. Twelfth North Carolina Regiment, R. D. Johnston's Brigade, Pegram's Division, then commanded by General James A. Walker.

A restless night, passed a mile away on the old Richmond and Lynchburg stage road, preceded the fateful morrow. There was present throughout its long hours a dull sense of impending catastrophe quickened by an occasional and ominous discharge of cannon and small arms to our left and front. Before the dawn we were up and under arms, and without water or food commenced, as we thought, the march for Lynchburg. As we entered the eastern limits of the town of Appomattox in column of fours, and just as the sun was rising, a cannon shot screamed over our heads from our immediate front, and we then knew that our forebodings were well founded. The enemy during the night had succeeded in his march around our left and was upon our front. Hurrying rapidly through the town we formed line of battle a half or three-quarters of a mile beyond and on the left of the road. We were a part of the troops General Grimes mentioned in his article on Appomattox, as a division commanded by General Walker "composed principally of Virginians." That division, in fact, was composed mostly of North Carolinians, Johnston's and Lewis' Brigades (North Carolinians), and Pegram's old Brigade (Virginians). The troops on the right of us were Grimes' Division.

Along the whole Confederate line as it advanced, the firing, so far as I could discern, was opened simultaneously, and when the men of Johnston's Brigade were ordered back I heard thereafter no continuous firing of small arms. The advance was supported by a battery of five pieces in position on the western slope of the hill, and that battery kept up its fire some minutes after the infantry had ceased to be engaged. In our advance we raised

the usual "rebel yell," and the line of Federals, dismounted cavalry, was quickly driven from its hastily constructed breastworks of rails and brush to the main line, on the hills, consisting of infantry and artillery. I saw the wheels of the gun carriages and the men with knapsacks and guns. They were not plainly discernible because of the thick and low growth of the timber along their line, although the ground over which we advanced was half meadow land, through which ran a ditch with running water parallel to the line, the whole being sparsely timbered, but of large growth.

The battle was severer on our right and we understood at the time that General Cox, with his brigade, had the brunt of it, and that they claimed the honor of firing the last rounds. Suddenly and just as it seemed to us we were about to engage the Union infantry, the order was given to march "right about," and we retired a few hundred yards in the direction of our first position, where we remained, perhaps an hour.

During that time nobody seemed to know anything about what was going on. There was a general idea that a truce was on, but no particulars. It was common talk, then, that at this very stage an interview took place between General Gordon and General Custer, the latter having come into our lines, under flag, to meet the Confederate general in command for a conference and to prevent further bloodshed; that Custer assured Gordon that the Union cordon was complete and strong enough to destroy the Confederates if they should attempt to break through; and that if General Gordon desired a verification of the statement he would take him on a round of inspection of the Federal lines; that the proposition was accepted and after the inspection had been made our Second Corps was ordered back to places convenient for camp. The generous treatment we afterwards received at their hands is proof that they were magnanimous enough to have made such a proposition.

It is certain that General Custer about that hour, or a little later, sought and found General Longstreet. That officer, in *From Manassas to Appomattox*, says that Custer demanded of him the surrender of the Confederate Army in the name of General Sheridan; that he was excited in his manner; that he re-

ceived from him (Longstreet) a rebuke for his intrusion; that he then became more moderate and said, "It would be a pity to have more bloodshed upon that field."

It seems that up to that time the two commanders had not yet met, and that Longstreet was preparing for battle after Gordon had withdrawn his corps from the front. I remember while we were standing awaiting orders, Sergeant Whitener, of Company A, said to me that the Army of Northern Virginia was about to be surrendered. I answered: "But we will have no difficulty in clearing the way; we have already shown that we can do that." He then pointed to the right and left to columns of Union troops, infantry, remarking: "We only struck their cavalry just now; we can never drive their infantry off; they are too strong." Our brigade was ordered back, probably a mile, for camp, into a small piece of poorly timbered land, white and post oak, on the right of the Lynchburg road; and the guns were stacked as usual on bivouac.

The first few hours were spent in uncertainty. We could not know that the terms would be of such a nature as to be accepted. When that suspense was quieted by the announcement that the terms were satisfactory and had been accepted by General Lee, a feeling of collapse, mental and physical, succeeded for some hours. Very little was said by men or officers. They sat, or lay on the ground in reflective mood, overcome by a flood of sad recollections. Few were to be seen away from their camps, and no life was there; in fact, on that day there were more Union troops to be seen on the road and in the fields within our line than Confederates.

During the afternoon rations of bread were issued to us, but no meat until the next day, and then in small quantities. The animals were entirely without long food, and they could be seen about in the fields in favorable spots trying to find the first grass and weeds of the season. It was understood that it was a matter of difficulty for the Union commissariat to get provisions for men and horses; and we had had very little for several days.

On the next day (Monday) the men began to recover themselves. They realized, not fully, it is true, but measurably, the tremendous importance of the event, and began to take thought



for the future. Of course their first thought was to reach their homes as soon as possible, for their services were, in most cases, sorely needed there. Crops could be planted and cultivated by those whose lives had been formerly on the farms, and the others, in some indefinite way, hoped for something to do. Then, they wished to get through with the trying ordeal of the act of surrender, for they did not know what the formalities might be, and in spite of their great deeds of the past, and consciences at rest on the score of duty performed to the last, they yet felt that it would be to them a humiliating scene. There was no personal bitterness in their hearts, little or no profane language, no curses upon their enemies. Their conduct was equal to the occasion.

I heard no word of ill-will against the National Government in the future, no suggestions of guerrilla warfare. The universal sentiment was that the questions in dispute had been fought to a finish, and that was the end of it. Their confidence in their general officers was unshaken, and for General Lee their affection and their esteem amounted to adoration. They knew he was heartbroken. In discussing the incidents which produced the most harmful effects upon the fortunes of the army, they mentioned the death of General Jackson, and the failure to occupy the heights at Gettysburg at the conclusion of the first day's battle. They also talked freely of the injustice of the conscript law, with its permission of substitutes and twenty-negro exemption, but I heard no breath of censure for the President who recommended those laws.

On Monday two matters of diversion occurred. General Gordon had the Second Corps, without arms, of course, assembled in massed columns, and from a central position, on horseback, delivered to them a farewell address. He spoke of their great and heroic achievements, of their privations and their sufferings, and their unselfish devotion to duty, and advised them to return to their homes to be as good citizens as they had been soldiers. He opened his speech with these words: "Soldiers of the Second Army Corps! No mathematician can compute the odds against which you have contended," and he entered into an exhortation that they maintain their principles and their courage, with the assurance on his part that in all future emergen-



cies, if the contest should be renewed, they would find him ready to lead them again; that "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." We heard that the tenor of the address was not much relished at the Federal headquarters.

Gordon was a good soldier throughout his entire service, and if, at the Wilderness on the evening of 6 May, 1864, when he struck Sedgwick, he had been in command of a corps, he would have rolled up Grant's right like a scroll. He was the most dashing of all the Confederates at Appomattox.

Just after the speaking, or while it was going on, a number of Federal cavalymen, who had been riding about our camps, one of them being under the influence of strong drink, gave us some trouble. The man in his cups, in spinning some yarns about his performances of the day before, mentioned that one of his number was captured by some of General Longstreet's men, and that some of the General's staff had taken from the prisoner his "housewife" (thread and needle case), when a Georgian standing by, not being familiar with the name of the article alleged to have been taken—house-wife—picked up a stone, and throwing it, brought his man to the ground. Considerable confusion ensued, and because of that circumstance, an order was issued from Federal headquarters that no Union soldiers should be allowed to visit the Confederate camps, without written permission.

On that day, also, General Custer rode over to Johnston's Brigade to see his friend and classmate at West Point, John W. Lea, who was Colonel of the Fifth North Carolina Regiment, and then in command of the brigade. They had met the day before at General Custer's quarters. General Custer brought with him an orderly with a basket of provisions and a flask of whiskey. Upon invitation of Colonel Lea, several of the officers of the brigade joined General Custer and himself in the luncheon. Custer was of a most cheerful disposition and very handsome in personal appearance. He told us that the honors of the 9th were really with the Confederates, all things considered; that he took no glory to himself when he ascertained the numbers of the Confederate army. On Monday also the paroles were printed and sent around to regimental headquarters—mine

is now before me and is dated 10 April, and signed by P. Durham, Captain Commanding Regiment.

We kept no guard around the camp and had no duties of any kind to perform; nor did we see a Union soldier with arms in his hands until the very moment at which our men, early on Wednesday morning, stacked their guns in front of the Federal Corps detailed to receive them. That was a most simple ceremony. In a line north and south, in a field, a Federal Corps was standing with arms at shoulder waiting to receive the Confederates and their arms. We filed, in fours, just in front of them, and ten feet off came to a halt and faced to the left; the guns were then stacked and the flags laid on the stacks.

The officers were allowed, under the terms of the surrender, to keep their side arms. Not a word was spoken; we did not even look into each others' faces. We were marched from the spot to the road and, without returning to camp, turned our faces toward the South, toward our homes—and as I looked back for the last time the Federal Corps had not moved from its tracks, nor had a gun or a flag been touched, and we had not yet opened our lips.

It soon became apparent that there was no system, or plan, about the march of the troops homeward. Somehow or other it became understood that General Grimes would conduct the North Carolinians on their way; anyhow a considerable number of them were under his directions, and he ordered the march toward Campbell Court House, with the intention to go from there to Danville. For two or three miles everything passed off smoothly. When, however, we came to a point where there was a divergent road leading in a more southerly direction, Private Thomas Royster, from Granville County, saluted the General and said, "General, you are a good officer and you know the road to take a good many of these boys to their homes, but I live lower down the Roanoke than Danville and it seems to me all who want to go to counties east of Granville should take this road; anyhow I am going to try it and all who want to follow me can come on."

Royster was a splendid soldier, considerably over six feet tall, symmetrical in form, with one of the best and kindest faces I

ever saw and a most intelligent and expressive eye. We never saw Royster aften ten minutes from the time we left the main column, for he with his strong body and long legs, had soon distanced us. A considerable number followed him. Amongst the number T. B. Watson, Austin Allen, R. H. Gilliland, Jas. M. Bobbitt, P. A. Bobbitt, J. H. Duke, Robert C. Montgomery, my brother, and myself. We soon formed a party, for the men, as if by instinct, broke up into small squads, and we eight continued together until we reached our homes in Warren County.

We started off with a small quantity of bread and coffee, but with no meat; but on our way, with one exception, we met with kindness and consideration from the residents. We had no conversation with any other soldier on our journey except a young man whom we found in a barn on a bed of straw on a plantation, near Rough Creek Church, our first night's camping ground. At that home there were only mother and daughter, the male members of the household being in their places in the army. At dark we walked up to the house and informed them of our condition and our desire to be allowed to use the barn for lodgings and to have the privilege of getting water from the well in the yard. They received us not only with politeness, but with kindness. They also added to our bread and coffee a piece of bacon and some sorghum molasses. In front of the barn we made a live coal fire and soon had our supper prepared. When the meal was over we filled our pipes with "Zephyr Puff," a brand of smoking tobacco, several packages of which I had taken from a burning pile in the streets of Petersburg, the night of the evacuation, and for the time we forgot our troubles.

About 9 o'clock we went again to the house and inquired of the two householders if they would like to hear some music, and upon the response, of course in the affirmative, Watson, who was a musician, leading with his cornet, and accompanied by the voices of the two Bobbitts, my brother and myself, all of us having belonged to a glee club in the army, we entertained them for half an hour.

On retiring to the barn and making our beds upon the straw, we stumbled upon our only acquaintance on the way, who was in a helpless condition, and who could not tell us how he came

to be there. He only said that he could go no further and had lain down there to die. He was merely exhausted from fatigue and want of food, and upon our preparing for him something to eat and a strong pot of coffee, his strength was revived. We left him in fair condition. He reached his home in Warren County and is now a well-to-do farmer and the head of a large family.

We heard of General Ransom along our route as helping along the tired and foot-sore by often dismounting and placing such in his saddle, and speaking to them words of hope and cheer. We greatly wished to come up with him, and to talk with him, for we had great interest and pride in him; his people and ours having been for generations connected by ties of friendship. We had watched his career as a soldier, which had reflected honor on his State and upon the South, and especially his strikingly brilliant conduct at Five Forks, a few days before.

We spent the next night (Thursday) near the town of Chase City, then called Christiansburg. In passing through Charlotte Court House, on that day, we called at a large well-appointed home in the midst of extensive grounds, and at once were asked into the family living room, the family consisting entirely of ladies and children, and at once were made to feel at ease. An invitation, heartily pressed upon us, to dine, we, of course, accepted. In the interval the cornet and the voices added interest to the occasion, delighting young and old, who had heard no sound of music for months. The war songs and old Southern ballads we had practiced, and often along the Shenandoah and Rappahannock we had given solace and pleasure to our friends and companions; but unfortunately on the present occasion we, without proper forethought, began "There Will Be One Vacant Chair," when the younger lady commenced to weep.

At once we knew the cause. We were thoughtless because there were so many vacant chairs in Southern households. In that particular case it was the husband's. But the elder lady made everything so easy and so delicately explained the situation that it passed off without further embarrassment, and we left their home after dinner with their thanks and prayers, as if we had conferred a favor upon them.

Our last night was spent near Roanoke at the hospitable home of Colonel Eaton, the uncle of Captain M. F. Taylor, who was mortally wounded on the retreat from Gettysburg. The nephew was, in truth, a most estimable gentleman and capable officer, and a great favorite with the whole regiment. He was the idol of the uncle, and we all could, sitting around that hearthstone, with truth and propriety join in honoring the dead hero and kinsman. The host was of large means, given to hospitality, and until a late hour we grieved over our losses, celebrated our victories, and mourned over the disappointment of our hopes. On rising the next morning for an early breakfast, had at our request, we found our shoes cleaned, our tattered uniforms brushed and hung on chairs. After the meal we left our kind entertainer standing on the front portico and almost overcome by his feelings, watching us as we disappeared forever from his sight, down the road that led us to our own beloved and bereaved ones.

All along our route we met with only kindness and consideration, with one exception. That was at the house of a man who was formerly a resident of our own county. He refused us water from his well, and a rest upon the steps of his house, although we informed him who we were, and he knew the families of us all. We shook the dust of his premises from our feet and renewed our journey. Before we had gotten out of sight one of his old negro slaves, who had heard the conversation between us, followed with his wife and, soon overtaking us, introduced himself as an old acquaintance of the father of each one of us whom he had known in Warren. He made apologies for the conduct of his master. He brought along with him a pair of chickens, some corn meal, and a bucket of water, and in a short while the old man and his wife had prepared for us a feast.

The old colored man said to us that when the female members of his master's family protested against his refusal to give to a Confederate soldier a cup of cold water he replied that he was afraid that they might have some contagious disease or depredate upon his poultry during the night. To the credit of humanity it may be said that we had few of such in the South. The refined feelings and delicate sensibilities of those old col-

ored people, manifested so strikingly in such substantial sympathy, made up a beautiful picture of Southern life; and wherever we eight have been we have told it as an everlasting memorial of them. On our last day's journey, at a fork of the Ridgeway and Alexander Ferry road, our party broke up, Watson, Allen and Gilliland continuing their way to their homes in the same neighborhood and we, the other five, to ours in Warrenton. We are all still living except Gilliland, and all bear upon our bodies lasting signs of those days.

Upon our arrival at Warrenton the streets were alive with the inhabitants anxiously waiting for the particulars of the surrender of which they had heard only vague reports. They were astonished at the news, and many of them expressed themselves in favor of "continuing the struggle," as they expressed it; but they were non-combatants.

WALTER A. MONTGOMERY.

















